SK
602
A9
H3

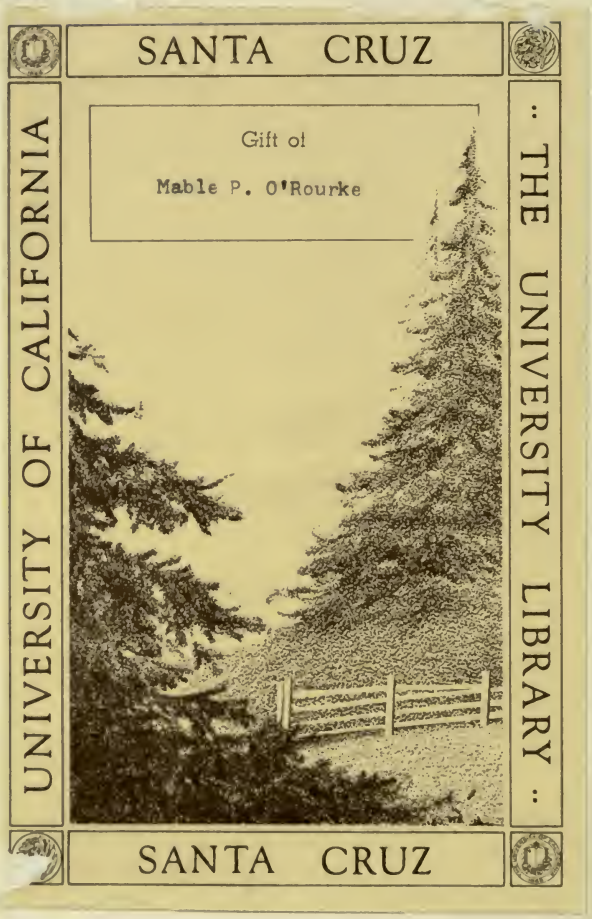
UC-NRLF
B 4 513 383

WILD FLOWER CALENDAR

AMY E. MACK

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SANTA CRUZ



SK
602
A9
H3

SP

A BUSH CALENDAR

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/bushcalendar00harrrich

The bushland path that through the gully strays,
And leads the wanderer into wonderland . . . . . .

A BUSH CALENDAR

BY

AMY E. MACK

(MRS. LAUNCELOT HARRISON)

With forty-two illustrations from Nature

SYDNEY

ANGUS & ROBERTSON LTD.

89-95 CASTLEREAGH STREET

1909

W. C. Penfold & Co., Printers, 183 Pitt Street, Sydney

PREFACE

"A Bush Calendar" was commenced with the idea of sharing with other bush lovers the pleasures which I myself have found in my walks, and it appeared originally on the Page for Women of the "Sydney Morning Herald." As the seasons advanced letters of encouragement were received from many readers who "knew their Bush" and from some who admittedly had not found the key which unlocks the book of Nature; and it is at the request of many of these unknown friends that the articles are reprinted. Although the book is not intended to be a complete scientific record, the lists of flowers and birds most in prominence each month have been so greatly extended that they may claim to be fairly representative of the coastal districts around Sydney.

My thanks are due to the proprietors of the "Sydney Morning Herald" for permission to reprint; to Mr. R. Hale for the cover design; to Mr. F. W. McLean for photographs of gully path and sunlit bracken; to Mr. A. Read for photograph of kookaburra; to Mr. J. Ramsay for photographs of yellow robins, fantail, jacky winter, mopokes, kingfisher's nest, young honey-eaters, lambert wren, and black-caps; to my husband for the remaining bird photographs and some of the flowers; and to Mr. S. W. Bacon for his personal interest in the engraving of the illustrations.

The native rose, eriostemon, dwarf apple, rock lilies, and banksia are from Kerry & Co.'s copyright photographs.

A. E. H.

Killara, 1909.

To

THE ONE WHO SHOWED ME THE WAY

WATTLE

August 1

ACCORDING to the official calendar it is still winter, but out in the bush all the world knows it is spring. Although the week's heavy rain has drenched and spoiled the laden branches of the cultivated wattles—the golden-hued Cootamundra and the Queensland—their paler sisters in the neighbouring bush have survived the downpour, and are shedding their nutty sweetness through a damp world, and the air is fragrant with early spring scents.

This afternoon there was actually a break in the grey sky, and a wind that seemed as if it might blow the rain away. The house grows unsupportable after a whole seven days of rain, and I felt I must go out into the freshness and green. So with old hat, short skirt, and strong high boots I started off along the muddy road to see what the week's rain had brought forth. On the upper part of the ridge the soil is shale, and here grow tall blue gums and iron barks, with grassy spreads beneath them. In the autumn this grass is a great hunting ground for mushrooms, but now as I trudged across the soppy sods there was nothing but green on every side. All green it was, but not all grass; for at the edge of the little creek, which was rushing along in muddy haste, I found a group of green orchids —those quaint delicate things with much-curved petals that look so like a strange bird's head. There were two sorts, one

with a single flower on the end of a tall stalk, the other with several similar though much smaller blossoms on the slender stem. Close by, the faint pink of a different orchid glowed softly, all three together making a dainty bunch.

Last week the bed of the creek was quite dry, but now a perfect river rushes along, drowning beneath its torrent the bright green herring-bone ferns which make a glade of greenery all the year round. Last week, too, I watched a tomtit bringing food to his mate as she sat on her nest in a small turpentine overhanging the creek, and I spied on a pair of blackcaps as they carried fine twigs to the making of their cradle nest in the highest branch of a much taller turpentine. To-day, as I neared the group of dark-leaved trees, two tomtits flew past with much agitation, the little golden backs gleaming brightly, and I guessed that there was no longer need for the mother bird to sit; for as the tomtits are about the first birds of all to build, the babies would be hatched. The little family had survived the long wet week, and now the parents were taking advantage of the fine spell to catch some tasty insects for the wee things. But the blackcaps had been outdone by the weather, and a few solitary threads were all that remained of the cradle. Overhead, amongst the topmost branches a number of the beautiful things darted, chattering and scolding, and probably looking out for likely spots to hang their nests. The blackcap is one of the prettiest of all the honey-eaters, with back of bright olive, breast of snowy white,

a rich, black head, white nape, and above his eye a patch of bright vermilion. He generally chooses the turpentine for his nesting tree, and hangs his little nest in the highest outermost bunch of leaves.

YOUNG DIAMOND-BIRDS

Last week when the creek was dry two diamond dicks were burrowing in the upper bank. There seemed little hope of their work remaining after all this rain, but it is always just as well

to look, so I turned my steps towards the spot. To my surprise as I approached, the male bird, a pretty little chap with spotted wings and head, darted out from the bank a foot or so above the stream. Fate had been kind, and the water had not reached the upper bank, where, at the end of the foot-long burrow, a little nest would soon hold a clutch of small white eggs.

The rain was still holding off, so I crossed the creek by a fallen tree, and almost immediately found myself on the sandstone country. Instantly the features of the bush were altered; the blue gums, ironbarks, and turpentines gave way to scribbly gums and banksias, beneath which grew in thick profusion all the prickly, spiky things which make real bush. Three kinds of wattle I found in a minute—the myrtle-leafed, the sweet-scented, and the fine-leafed—and their drying flowers were full of sweetness. Growing beneath the shelter of the small banksias and other thick shrubs were clumps and clumps of the deep pink boronia in full bloom, the starry blossoms quite unspoiled by the rain; but the dillwynia, which should be painting the whole ground gold, bent, sad and pale, its drenched blossoms beneath the clinging raindrops; and faded, too, by the excessive rain were the red spider-flowers, usually so gay and bright in the later winter months.

A breath of nutty fragrance told of the presence of the little whitebeard, and I saw it sheltering beneath the thicker plants, the white of its open flower contrasting prettily with the soft red of its unopened bud. All through the bush the needlebush

showed white blossoms amongst its spiky leaves, and in one tree I found a redhead's nest quite within reach. I approached it very gingerly—for the needlebush lives well up to its name—and after a few scratches, one right down my chin, I managed to put my hand on to the retort-shaped bundle, and tilting it gently, rolled out five eggs. Pure white they should have been; but they were so stained and discoloured that I knew at once they were addled, and the nest bore signs that the birds had been using it as a resting-place in the wet weather. Evidently it had been deserted by its rightful owners, and other birds had taken possession, using it as a storm shelter—a fate which often befalls the redhead's nest.

Amongst the banksias and ti-tree, white-cheeked and New Holland honey-eaters were noisily feeding and fussing. They are both rather showy members of the family, with black-and-white bodies, and yellow-edged wings, the only marked difference between them being the broad white fan-shaped tuft of the white-cheeked honey-eater, from which he gets his name. Both birds were evidently building, and in a little banksia I found the nest of the New Holland, with two tiny, hideous, featherless birds gaping widely for food. Further on in the heath close to the ground I found the nest of another honey-eater, known to science as the tawny-crowned. An insignificant little brown bird he is, but with a voice of liquid sweetness, which is to be heard on the heathlands most months of the year, floating with a gentle melancholy through the air.

NEST OF COACHWHIP BIRD

But the find of the afternoon was down by the creek at the bottom of the gully. There, amongst the thick scrubby bushes I heard the ringing call of the coachwhip bird; and almost immediately by merest accident, in pushing my way through the undergrowth, I stumbled across its nest of loosely joined twigs, wherein lay two eggs of exquisite blue, boldly blotched with sepia spots. Rare, indeed, is it to find a coachwhip building so early in the year, and to come across a nest with a full set more than repaid me for my long wet walk. And when upon my homeward way I met the first butterfly of the season, a pretty, bright, brown thing, with black-veined wings, I felt that, despite the rain, which was once more beginning to creep up, spring was indeed on her way.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Ranunculus lappaceus	Buttercup
Hibbertia billardieri	
Tetratheca ericifolia	
Zieria laevigata	
Boronia ledifolia	
Boronia poligalifolia	
Correa speciosa	Native fuchsia
Ricinocarpus pinifolius	Native jasmine
Acacia juniperina	Juniper-leafed wattle
Acacia suaveolens	Sweet-scented wattle
Acacia myrtifolia	Myrtle-leafed wattle
Acacia linearis	Fine-leafed wattle
Dillwynia ericifolia	
Bossiaea scolopendria	
Cryptandra amara	
Hovea linearis	

Hardenbergia monophylla	False sarsaparilla
Grevillea punicea	Red spider-flowers
Hakea acicularis	Needlebush
Banksia ericifolia	Honeysuckles, or Bottlebrushes
Banksia marginata	
Olearia ramulosa	Snow bush
Pimelea glauca	
Pimelea linifolia	
Astroloma humifusum	Ground berry
Epacris longiflora	Native fuchsia
Epacris microphylla	
Epacris pulchella	
Lysinema pungens	White heath
Leucopogon microphyllus	White-beard
Leucopogon ericoides	
Pterostylis nutans	Green orchids
Pterostylis reflexa	
Pterostylis longifolia	

BIRDS ARRIVING IN AUGUST.

Hirundo neoxena	Swallow
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid cuckoo

BIRDS DEPARTING IN AUGUST.

Acanthochaera carunculata	Gill-bird (Wattled honeyeater)

BIRDS BREEDING IN AUGUST.

Corone australis	Raven
Grallina picata	Peewee
Collyriocincla harmonica	Thrush
Eopsaltria australis	Yellow robin
Malurus superbus	Blue wren
Malurus lamberti	Chestnut-shouldered wren
Origma rubricata	Rock-warbler
Acanthiza pusilla	Brown tit
Acanthiza lineata	Striped tit

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit (Yellow-rumped tit)
Acanthiza reguloides	Bark tit (Buff-rumped tit)
Psophodes crepitans	Whip-bird
Climacteris scandens	Tree-creeper
Climacteris leucophoea	White-throated tree-creeper
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Meliornis sericea	White-cheeked honey-eater
Glyciphila fulvifrons	Tawny-crowned honey-eater
Ptilotis auricomis	Yellow-tufted honey-eater
Ptilotis chrysops	Yellow-faced honey-eater
Melithreptus lunulatus	Blackcap
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Pardalotus punctatus	Diamond-bird
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead (Red-browed finch)
Anthus australis	Ground-lark (Pipit)
Menura superba	Lyre-bird
Cacomantis flabelliformis	Fan-tailed cuckoo
Chalcococcyx plagosus	Bronze cuckoo
Chalcococcyx basalis	Narrow-billed bronze cuckoo

EPACRIS

September 1

TO-DAY I found a treasure trove. On the slope of a gentle hill, beneath the shade of young turpentines and sassafras trees, all starred amongst the soft green grass and maidenhair, stood dozens and dozens of the daintest flowers imaginable, pale mauve and pure white orchids. Their pale faces, lifted skyward on the end of their slender stems, gleamed like stars amongst the short fronds of fern, till a soft wind crept past and set them fluttering like fettered butterflies. Every fairylike blossom sang of spring, and the faint sweet scent which came from them was like an odour from a past September. Too lovely they were to touch, so I just sat and looked at them, and dreamed long dreams—the dreams that always stir and rise as sunny-haired September creeps into the year.

I was not the only dreamer in that beauty spot. A gentle movement in a tree close by caught my eye, and, turning, I saw a yellow-bob seated upon her nest. Built on the top of a

broken branch, and ornamented with hanging strips of bark, it looked so like part of the tree that, but for the slight movement of her tail, I should never have spied the little mother cuddling down upon her nest. She knew at once I had seen her, and her big bright eye watched me suspiciously, but not another movement did she make until I came quite close to

MAUVE ORCHIDS

her, then hurriedly she flew off with a little frightened "tchew-tchew." I peeped over the edge of the nest, and saw two apple-green eggs, all spotted with red. No wonder the little bird was dreaming so happily, and no wonder she flew away in such dread at my approach. But she had no need for fear; I would

Cuddling down upon her nest
YELLOW ROBIN

not touch her pretty treasures, and, knowing that she would not return while I was near, I calmed her feelings by going on my way.

Such a sweet and flower-decked way it was, too. All amongst the undergrowth grew the bright yellow pea-flowers of the platylobium, with its pretty sarsaparilla-like leaves, myriads of bees droning amongst the blossoms; where the trees were fewer, "snow bushes" grew white, their slender branches massed with myriads of dainty white daisy flowers. On the grass beside them the yellow orchids, which children here call cowslips, showed in the

clearings, while among the tangles of turpentines and gum-suckers two or three different wattles and a white-beard wafted sweetness abroad.

There were other sweets amongst those same small turpentines. In one, quite close to the ground, I found the nest of a white-cheeked honey-eater; a cosy little home it was, carefully made of fibres, and lined warmly with the soft brown velvet of the banksias. Resting on the rich lining were two exquisite eggs of a delicate pinky cream, with a zone of red spots—a marking characteristic of honey-eaters' eggs. Quite close, in another turpentine, I found a similar nest, but this time in place of the eggs were two bare tiny chicks. As soon as I drew near the mother bird came up scolding and chattering furiously, with her fine white tufts puffed out in fear and anger. Evidently she was not able to recognise a friend, so I moved away, and from a little distance watched her fly down to the infants with a tender, anxious cry.

Suddenly above her voice came a sharp bird note, the voice of the spine-billed honey-eater. "Quick, quick, be quick," he called as he flew past, his gun-blue back shining in the sun. "Quick, quick, hurry up, hurry up, quick, quick, quick," called his mate, and she too darted past with loud wing-beat. I followed through the bushes, and after watching their movements for a while saw one fly up with a fibre in his long sharp beak. I crept nearer, and there, in the highest branch of a turpentine sapling, hung an almost finished cradle. It was well out of my reach, so I did not attempt to see closer.

But very soon I came across a nest into which I could easily see. Through the bushes came a faint, sibilant note, which I recognised at once as that of the chestnut-shouldered wren, a rarer cousin of our garden friend, the blue wren. Very still I stood, and waited patiently, gazing in the direction of the cry. Nearer and nearer it came, and suddenly only a few yards in front of me there hopped out a tiny brown mouse-like bird, with a long blue tail held very erect. It was the female, and in her beak she carried a long thread of grass. With hops and jerks she came through the bushes, and then with a flutter made towards a clump of grass almost within my reach, but hidden from sight by a thick sapling. Just for a second she stayed, then was off, but without the thread. I peeped round the sapling, and there, almost on the ground, was her little bulky nest of grass, with its side entrance carefully hidden by the protecting grasses. The nest was almost finished and ready for eggs. The common blue wrens have been a little quicker with their building, for last week I found their nest with two eggs, half the full set.

A sharp "twit-twit-twit" sounded in my ear, and I turned quickly in time to see a small greenish-brown bird flash past. It was the little brown tit, and in his beak he carried a small morsel of food. I followed him quietly and watched him dart for a moment into a small bush and then out again, and away. I stepped up to the spot and there came across one of the tragedies of the bush. In amongst the branches was set a small

A Bush Tragedy

oval nest, with a doorway at the side, and at this doorway was a sad little sight, of which I had often heard but had never seen with my own eyes. Hanging by its slender claws to the grass threads of the nest, lay the dead body of a tiny baby tit, while on the ground below lay another small body. Inside the nest, where the two baby tits should have been safely hidden, was huddled a bulky young fantail cuckoo, who opened his wide yellow bill, and peeked hungrily at me. He was not sorry for the poor infants he had tumbled out to their death; all he cared for was to get enough to eat, and he squawked and squawked, while the two small foster parents worked their hardest to satisfy his voracious appetite.

But fascinating as the forest country was, I knew that a wealth of beauty was awaiting me; so I pushed on down the hill, across the creek, and up on to the sandstone. As I passed the creek a diamond bird flew by to a hole in the bank, and by the cheeping and squeaking that came from within I knew there were three or four baby birds in the cosy nest at the end of the tunnel. I did not linger long near this little strange home, for the blaze of colour ahead lured me on. Surely there was never anything more beautiful than that stretch of bush, which but a few weeks before had been bare and unlovely. Now it shone and shimmered with a wealth of flowers of every colour and shape. Spring had flung her gold with a prodigal hand, and the yellow pea-flowers of the dillwynia, the pultenaea, and the aotus gleamed like tiny fairy sovereigns, while lower

down on the sand the gold and rich brown flowers of the bossiaea shone on their quaint, flat, leafless stems. Pale in comparison to the gorgeous pea blossoms were the lemon-yellow flower spikes of the lemon-scented phebalium, which grew near the creek, and even the golden balls of the juniper-leafed wattle paled before their brilliancy. But here was another flower which vied with them in gorgeousness; it was the deep pink boronia, which spread like a flowing carpet on every hand. A week ago it was at its height of glory; now, it is just on its wane, though still full of beauty. But in a few more weeks it will make way for its paler sister, the one which is sold in the streets. Amongst the boronia, the lysinema lifted tall, sweet, white spikes, and three other epacrids lent softness to the colour scheme, while close by a regular mass of white-beards in full bloom shed an intoxicating sweetness and fascinated hundreds of bees to their midst. Another sweet-scented flower I found was logania, a shrub with small creamy bell flowers, growing near the creek.

Then up on the heathlands I came across a host of sprengelia, one of the epacris family, whose thick, pink heads of star-blossoms stand straight up amongst the brown grass or green bead fern. It is always found in the heath, especially in the swampy parts, and is very plentiful near Long Bay and Maroubra. Up on those same highlands last week I found the first native rose (boronia serrulata), and also the first hibbertia —a golden blossom very like a small dog-rose. There, too,

I found an eriostemon in flower, with its pale pink starry blossoms gleaming like tiny camellias against its silvery stems and long leaves. This flower is one of our best spring bloomers, and with its sister, the box-leafed eriostemon, is very plentiful along the coast.

Star-eyed Sprengelia paints the uplands pink

There is one flower which it is not necessary to go further than the train window to see, and that is the hardenbergia. Just at present it is wrapping all the cuttings in its regal coat of purple; it streams over the red clay, creeps through the green grass, clambers over old logs and fences, and even climbs into the branches of small trees. Sometimes it is accompanied by its less conspicuous friend, the tecoma, that creeper with creamy red-spotted bells, which make soft masses of bloom over fences and tree trunks. The white wax stars of the wild clematis also shine out of the grass of the railway embankments, or festoon with bridal wreaths the tree trunks in the brush.

It is, indeed, a time of sweetness in sight and scent and sound. The air is everywhere fragrant with perfume, the eyes are gladdened on every side by gorgeous blossoms, and as for the sounds—the world is full of them. It is quite impossible to sleep these mornings, for at daybreak begins the bird chorus, led always by the Jacky Winter, whose "peter, peter, peter," is the first bird note to greet the morn. Even through the night the birds are not silent. Last night I heard two cuckoos calling all through the hours

CLEMATIS

of darkness; the wail of the bronze cuckoo was answered again and again by the rollicking note of the pallid cuckoo, the one of his family who seems least oppressed by his fate. Now is the time of all times for one to peep into the mysteries of the bush, and those who have not yet read from the magic pages of Nature's book will find no better season for opening the cover than sweet September.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Clematis glycinoides	
Hibbertia billardieri	
Tetratheca ericifolia	
Zieria laevigata	
Zieria pilosa	
Zieria smithi	
Boronia ledifolia	
Boronia pinnata	
Boronia floribunda	
Boronia serrulata	Native rose
Correa alba	
Correa speciosa	Native fuchsia
Philotheca australis	
Phebalium dentatum	
Phebalium squamulosum	
Eriostemon buxifolius	
Eriostemon lanceolatus	
Ricinocarpus pinifolius	Native jasmine
Acacia baileyana	Cootamundra silver wattle
Acacia decurrens	Green wattle
Acacia juniperina	Juniper-leafed wattle
Acacia juniperina (var. Browni)	
Acacia longifolia	Sydney golden wattle
Acacia floribunda	

Acacia myrtifolia	Myrtle-leafed wattle
Acacia stricta	
Pultenaea stipularis	Yellow pea-flowers
Pultenaea daphnoides	
Phyllota phyllicoides	
Dillwynia ericifolia	
Dillwynia floribunda	
Dillwynia juniperina	
Platylobium formosum	
Bossiaea scolopendria	
Daviesia genistifolia	
Aotus villosa	
Hovea linearis	
Indigofera australis	Native indigo
Hardenbergia monophylla	False sarsaparilla
Leptospermum laevigatum	Tea-trees
Leptospermum scoparium	
Cryptandra amara	
Petrophila pulchella	
Isopogon anethifolius	Drum stick
Telopea speciosissima	Waratah
Conospermum ericifolium	
Grevillea punicea	Red spider-flower
Grevillea buxifolia	Grey spider-flower
Grevillea linearis	White spider-flower
Grevillea sericea	Pink spider-flower
Grevillea mucronulata	Green spider-flower
Hakea pugioniformis	Needlebush
Hakea acicularis	Needlebush
Banksia ericifolia	Bottlebrushes or Honeysuckle
Banksia marginata	
Olearia ramulosa	Snow-bush
Logania floribunda	
Mitrasacme polymorpha	
Pimelea glauca	
Pimelea linifolia	
Tecoma australis	
Brachyloma daphnoides	

Astroloma humifusum	Ground-berries
Epacris longiflora	Native fuchsia
Epacris obtusifolia	
Epacris microphylla	
Epacris pulchella	
Lysinema pungens	White heath
Sprengelia incarnata	
Leucopogon amplexicaulis	White beards
Leucopogon lanceolatus	
Leucopogon Richei	
Leucopogon ericoides	
Styphelia longifolia	Green five-corners
Styphelia tubiflora	Red five-corners
Styphelia triflora	Cream and pink five-corners
Diuris maculata	Yellow orchid
Caladenia alba	White orchid
Glossodia major	Mauve orchid
Glossodia minor	
Thelymitra ixiodies	Wild Ixia
Pterostylis reflexa	Green orchid
Dendrobium speciosum	Rock lily

BIRDS ARRIVING IN SEPTEMBER.

Lalage tricolor	White-shouldered caterpillar-eater
Gerygone albigularis	Native canary (White-throated fly-eater)
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Myzomela sanguinolenta	Blood-bird
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher

BIRDS BREEDING IN SEPTEMBER.

Corone australis	Raven
Grallina picata	Peewee
Collyriocincla harmonica	Thrush
Lalage tricolor	White-shouldered caterpillar-eater
Rhipidura albiscapa	Fantail

Rhipidura tricolor	Wagtail
Sisura inquieta	Razor-grinder (Restless flycatcher)
Microeca fascinans	Jacky Winter (Brown flycatcher)
Gerygone albigularis	Native canary
Eopsaltria australis	Yellow robin
Malurus superbus	Blue wren
Malurus lamberti	Chestnut-shouldered wren
Origma rubricata	Rock-warbler
Cisticola exilis	Grass-warbler
Acanthiza pusilla	Brown tit
Acanthiza nana	Yellow-bellied tit
Acanthiza lineata	Striped tit
Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit
Acanthiza reguloides	Bark-tit
Psophodes crepitans	Whip-bird
Ephthianura albifrons	White-fronted chat
Cracticus destructor	Butcher bird
Pachycephala gutturalis	Yellow-breasted thickhead
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Falcunculus frontatus	Shrike-tit
Climacteris scandens	Tree-creeper
Climacteris leucophoea	White-throated tree-creeper
Sittella chrysoptera	Tree-runner
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Meliornis sericea	White-cheeked honey-eater
Glyciphila fulvifrons	Tawny-crowned honey-eater
Ptilotis auricomis	Yellow-tufted honey-eater
Ptilotis chrysops	Yellow-faced honey-eater
Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris	Spine-billed honey-eater
Myzomela sanguinolenta	Blood-bird
Melithreptus lunulatus	Blackcap
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Pardalotus punctatus	Diamond-bird
Hirundo neoxena	Swallow
Artamus sordidus	Wood-swallow
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead
Anthus australis	Ground-lark
Podargus strigoides	Morepork (Frogmouth)

Dacelo gigas	Jackass
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid cuckoo
Cacomantis flabelliformis	Fan-tailed cuckoo
Chalcococcyx plagosus	Bronze cuckoo
Chalcococcyx basalis	Narrow-billed bronze cuckoo
Turnix varia	Painted quail

NATIVE ROSE

October 1

QUITE early last month the pittosporum came out and scented the world with its sweetness. It streamed through gardens and along roads, vieing with the stocks and freesias in beauty, and for a week or so the nights were intoxicating with its perfume. It is over now in the gardens; and in the bush, its native sphere, only a stray blossom remains to tell of the glory that has passed. But though the pittosporum has had its day and vanished, there is still a long succession of sweets to greet the senses at every stage. The heavier-scented white-blossomed plants, such as the white-beards and logania, are almost over, but the real bush-sweet, aromatic scents have taken their place. Up on the highlands there is a perfume which, if you met it in the farthest corner of the earth, would carry you straight back to Sydney on a sunny day. It is not of any particular flower or tree, but of dozens and dozens of them, all mixed up together, blossoms and leaves, and the smell of the earth; and it is a scent that brings freshness and health with it, clears the brain, and makes you throw back your head with a smile of content.

It is a scent that drags you willy-nilly out into the bush, and as Monday was a whole free day, and the sun was bright, I took my bag and billy, and went out to enjoy the delights. And, oh, such a day I had! Ten minutes after leaving the railway line I was in bush as thick and real as if it were miles from any city. A rough cart-track crawled white and dusty through the scrub; but even in the ruts grew flowers—blue dampiera, yellow goodenia, and a tall brown orchid, almost indistinguishable from the grass around it. Along the sides of the track stretched dwarf apple (with red velvety buds, which in a little while will break into a mass of creamy blossoms), and stunted gums and tea-trees. Beneath the shelter of the bushes gleamed in rosy masses the paler boronia—the deep pink one has entirely vanished—and the clumps of a pale mauve star-flower, philotheca.

A little further on the apples and saplings gave way to taller scribbly gums beneath whose shelter one of the dillwynias raised golden spikes, while a pultenaea sent up great heads of still deeper gold to outshine it in gorgeousness. Beyond the gums stretched the marsh which a month ago was a carpet of pink sprengelia, now snowy white with the tubular-flowered epacris, sweetest of all the heaths, and the conospermum, whose flower heads, mostly unfavourably known as the centre pieces of stiff bunches, wave gracefully on long slender stems in their natural surroundings.

But it was where the track ran round the side of the hill

that the sweetest flowers were found. Against the grey rocks huge bushes of bauera, the native dog-rose, stretched feathery pink-laden sprays, and tall, white tea-trees made a happy hunting-ground for numerous small, shining beetles. And, lower

ROCK LILIES

down, sheltered from sun and wind, grew a whole treasure trove of that most prized flower, the palest pink boronia, which at present is glorifying the street baskets. In a few minutes my

hands were as full as they would hold of the feathery beauty. At least, I thought so, till I spied the deeper pink of still another boronia, the native rose, which was scattered profusely over the grey sand. Then such a bunch I gathered of the two together, and it was only when I was absolutely unable to hold another stalk that I could tear myself away.

But there were more joys awaiting me. At the point I had decided on as my destination I came upon a sight that was more like a scene from a fairy book than a bit of Australian bush. On the top of a little knoll is a group of tall she-oaks whose needles, undisturbed for years, have made a soft, brown carpet beneath the trees; and to-day, growing in every direction across this carpet, were hundreds of lobelias, their bright blue, delicate blossoms swaying gently at the faintest breath. Here, resting on the fragrant carpet, I ate my lunch; and never did hard-boiled eggs taste better, though it seemed almost a sacrilege to bring such mundane things into such surroundings.

On my way home I came round by the creek, and there I simply had to gather another bunch of flowers, for no one could have resisted the gorgeousness of the gompholobium—alas the name!—with its huge pea-flowers of purest yellow. The whole creek was lined with gold, for one of the pultenaeas stretched long, yellow, flower-laden sprays a dozen feet into the air, and shed sweetness everywhere on the hillside. I also found masses of the dainty mauve creeper comesperma, which

has taken the place of the hardenbergia, now departed, and I had to add it to the yellow bunch.

Fortunately for my poor hands, I did not come across any waratahs or rock-lilies, though they are out in all their glory at present. But it is quite impossible to pass empty-handed through the bush these days, for spring has been painting the world with a lavish brush since early August, and September and October are most gorgeous of all months for flower treasures.

GOMPHOLOBIUM

September has been a busy time for the birds, too. A fortnight ago I found the tiniest nest I have ever seen. I was watching a lovely little red-headed honey-eater—that beautiful scarlet and black bird, familiarly known as the bloodbird—feeding busily in the top of a small turpentine tree, and ceasing

operations now and again to utter his little running call. This was answered from higher up the hill, and presently his small brown mate came hurrying into the tree, and commenced to weave a bark fibre into her tiny cradle, which was quite invisible until she drew my attention to it. It was not much bigger than half-a-crown, and so thinly built that a week later I could plainly see the two tiny eggs through the bottom of the nest. These last are creamy white, with a zone of brownish spots round the top, and are so small as to make it almost incredible that they can ever hold little birds within their shell.

The eggs are something like, though smaller than, those of the little grey fantail, which is also nesting now. I know two nests, both like wineglasses with the foot broken off, neatly covered with grey-white cobweb, and both now containing eggs. The square-tailed cuckoo generally places her egg in the fantail's nest; but this parasitic lady only arrived last Saturday, so my fantails have escaped her imposition. The square-tailed has the funniest note of all the cuckoos. The bird begins quite quietly, but seems to work up into a state of excitement, and her song ends in an incoherent high-pitched whistle. The whole sounds something like, "We're going to work, we're going to work, we're going to work, we're going to—we are, we are, we are." And they go to work quickly, too; as I shall show you.

Last month I was pleased to have found a nest of the chestnut-shouldered wren, first cousin to our common blue

FANTAIL ON NEST

wren. Pleased, because the bird is rather rare, and the nest is always hard to find. Last month's nest now contains a family. On Saturday last I came across another nest, the owners of which have not been quite so fortunate; I was down the gully—where I had flushed a thrush from her beautifully-situated bark nest, placed in a little cavity in the charred hollow of an old tree, and was peeping at her pearly treasures, with their spots of slate and brown—when a male wren came hurrying across the creek, and flew straight to a dead bush lying on the ground, from which a larger bird came away, the little wren following in indignant pursuit. I saw that the big bird was the square-tailed cuckoo, which had only arrived that very day, and walked over to the bush to see the cause of the fuss. I at once saw the wrens' nest, and beneath it, on the ground, were two unbroken eggs, which the cuckoo had evidently turned out. No wonder Mr. Wren was indignant. I did not interfere, as I wanted to see

whether the cuckoo would place her own egg in the nest, but on returning two days later, found the third egg had been turned out. I suppose the cuckoo was not ready to lay, and wanted to start the wrens afresh, so that they could have a

CHESTNUT-SHOULDERED WREN (female)

nest prepared by the time she was ready. Cuckoos are given to cool habits of this kind.

Other birds which have returned from their northward flight are the kingfisher and the native canary. All day long the running liquid song of the latter sounds amid the saplings,

and I know of a nest just ready for lining. The thickheads, sweetest of all songsters, are building, too, and their fibre nests are seen in several tea-trees, while a pair of kookaburras are busy tunnelling into an ants' nest in a tree down in the next paddock. It is the busiest month in the year, and the time when anyone who wants to know the birds can easily become acquainted with them.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Hibbertia Billardieri	
Viola betonicafolia	Wild violet
Hybanthus filiforme	Winged violet
Tetratheca ericifolia	
Zieria pilosa	
Zieria laevigatum	
Drosera pygmoea	Sundews, flycatchers
Comesperma volubile	
Comesperma ericinum	
Boronia pinnata	
Boronia floribunda	
Boronia serrulata	Native rose
Correa alba	
Correa speciosa	Native fuchsia
Philotheca australis	
Eriostemon buxifolius	
Eriostemon lanceolatus	
Lasiopetalum ferrugineum	
Ricinocarpus pinifolius	Native jasmine
Poranthera ericifolia	
Gompholobium grandiflorum	
Phyllota phyllicoides	
Pultenaea daphnoides	
Pultenaea stricta	
Pultenaea retusa	

Pultenaea villosa	
Pultenaea flexilis	
Dillwynia ericifolia	
Dillwynia floribunda	
Bauera rubioides	Wild dog-rose
Bauera capitata	
Darwinia fascicularis	Bread and meat plant
Leptospermum laevigatum	Tea-trees
Leptospermum scoparium	
Pomaderris lanigera	
Pomaderris elliptica	
Olax stricta	
Grevillea punicea	Red spider-flower
Grevillea buxifolia	Grey spider-flower
Telopea speciosissima	Waratah
Conospermum ericifolium	
Lobelia dentata	
Lobelia gracilis	
Dampiera stricta	
Goodenia ovata	
Westringia rosmariniformis	Wild rosemary
Chloanthes stoechadis	
Epacris obtusifolia	
Epacris microphylla	
Epacris pulchella	
Dendrobium speciosum	Rock lily

BIRDS ARRIVING IN OCTOBER.

Myiagra rubecula	Leaden flycatcher
Cacomantis insperatus	Square-tailed cuckoo

BIRDS BREEDING IN OCTOBER.

Corone australis	Raven
Grallina picata	Peewee
Collyriocincla harmonica	Thrush
Lalage tricolor	White-shouldered caterpillar-eater

Rhipidura albiscapa	Fantail
Rhipidura tricolor	Wagtail
Sisura inquieta	Razor-grinder
Myiagra rubecula	Leaden flycatcher
Microeca fascinans	Jacky Winter
Gerygone albigularis	Native canary
Eopsaltria australis	Yellow-robin
Malurus superbus	Blue wren
Malurus lamberti	Lambert wren
Origma rubricata	Rock-warbler
Cisticola exilis	Grass-warbler
Acanthiza pusilla	Brown tit
Acanthiza nana	Yellow-bellied tit
Acanthiza lineata	Striped tit
Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit
Acanthiza reguloides	Bark-tit
Psophodes crepitans	Whip-bird
Ephthianura albifrons	White-fronted chat
Cracticus destructor	Butcher-bird
Pachycephala gutturalis	Yellow-breasted thickhead
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Falcunculus frontatus	Shrike-tit
Climacteris scandens	Tree-creeper
Climacteris leucophoea	White-throated tree-creeper
Sittella chrysoptera	Tree-runner
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Glyciphila fulvifrons	Tawny-crowned honey-eater
Ptilotis chrysops	Yellow-faced honey-eater
Ptilotis auricomis	Yellow-tufted honey-eater
Acanthorhynchus tenuirostis	Spine-billed honey-eater
Myzomela sanguinolenta	Blood-bird
Melithreptus lunulatus	Blackcap
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Pardalotus punctatus	Diamond-bird
Hirundo neoxena	Swallow
Artamus sordidus	Wood-swallow
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead
Anthus australis	Ground-lark
Podargus strigoides	Morepork

Dacelo gigas	Jackass
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid cuckoo
Cacomantis flabelliformis	Fan-tailed cuckoo
Cacomantis insperatus	Square-tailed cuckoo
Chalcococcyx plagosus	Bronze-cuckoo
Chalcococcyx basalis	Narrow-billed bronze-cuckoo
Turnix varia	Painted quail

LLOW
CHIDS

November 1

IT was two butterflies that did the mischief to-day. I had quite made up my mind to have a nice day's sewing, and had planned two blouses to be made; but while I sat at breakfast on the verandah those blue butterflies came floating by, and the blouses were forgotten. In and out amongst the red tips of the gum saplings they flittered, living turquoise in a frame of burnished copper. A little wind, too young to be rough, flittered softly after them and set the red leaves dancing as it passed. Some sunbeams, seeing the dancing leaves, came to join in the fun, and butterflies, leaves, and sunbeams danced and sparkled together in the soft sweet breeze.

It was irresistible. I set down my coffee cup and stood up. "It's no use," I said to myself, "no one could be expected to sit still and sew

to-day, when all the world's a-dancing. It is a day for the bush!' So off to the bush I went.

The butterflies danced off before me to show me the way. Down the hill they went, where a grass-covered slope runs to the creek. The hillside was a-dancing, too, with the quivering shivery grass, and the blue wings fluttered daintily over the feathery, waving mass. To the creek they led me, where the young fronds of the herring-bone ferns shone red against the vivid green of the older fronds. I stopped a minute to gaze into their funnily-curled tips and touch their soft hairy stems. When I looked up again the butterflies had gone. Perhaps they had flown on to entice someone else out to the trees and grass. I was sorry to lose the beautiful things, but I no longer needed their guidance. They had shown me the way and I would find the rest for myself.

The question was not which way to go, but which way not to go, for something called on every side. Just behind me as I stood came a running stream of song, sweet and clear. It was the voice of the native canary, as he sat in the lower branches of a small gum, only a few yards from me; with the morning sun on his bright yellow breast and small white throat, he more than rivalled his namesake in colour and sweetness. Near him, on a small twig sat his little mate, with wings outspread, busily preening herself. They did not move as I stepped towards them, but, even when I found their little nest hanging in the sapling beneath them, went on quite

unconcernedly with their occupations, he with his song and she with her toilet. Such a cosy little home it was, with its little side door covered by an overhanging roof. I rolled it gently over, and out in the palm of my hand rolled one, two, three pink-spotted eggs. Now the little mistress bird showed signs of agitation, though not of alarm; but master went on unconcernedly with his song. I did not want to harass the dear things' feelings, so I quickly put the eggs back into their hiding place; and I hope that in a little while I shall have the joy of seeing three baby birds' faces peeping out from the tiny porch.

KINGFISHER AT NEST

"Cree-cree-cree" went a harsh, shrill note, as a gleam of turquoise flashed through the trees. It was the note of the sacred kingfisher, as he flew down the creek to a big old red gum. Here, half-way to the top, jutted out a knobby ants'

nest, to which the kingfisher darted, and I knew that within lay a clutch of pure white eggs. For the birds came down from the north more than a month ago, and have been busy building since their arrival. A little while they will stay with us, nesting and bringing out their young, brightening the bush with their gay plumage, and deafening our ears with their loud voices. Then, early in the year, before the first cold days of autumn have arrived, they will be off again on their northward flight.

In another red gum not far off I found a second bird breeding in an ants' nest. It was our friend the kookaburra, who is also a kingfisher. He must have had some difficulty in making up his mind where to nest, for the red gum branches were full of the most alluring spouts, which must have been hard to resist. For the kookaburra, as well as the sacred kingfisher, is just as fond of a spout as an ants' nest, and when he finds both together it must be rather hard to choose between them. However, the ants' nest had it this time, and soon there will be some new little kookaburras to join their voices to the laughing morning chorus.

Already the bush is a-twitter with baby voices, and parent birds are kept very busy finding food for the hungry ones. As I walked along the creek I saw a little grey bird running head first down the trunk of a stringy bark, and peering into every crack and crevice as he went. It was the little tree-runner, who always gets his food in this manner. He flies to

the top of a tree, works carefully downwards, poking his pointed, upturned bill into every cranny until he reaches the ground, then flies off to another top, to repeat the performance. I watched him working busily for a while, till his industry was rewarded by a nice fat grub, which he immediately carried off to a branch above and killed. Then, with the grub in his beak, he flew away, showing a band of rich orange on his outstretched wings. Away he went to the top of a high tree, where in the fork of a withered branch was placed one of the neatest nests in all the bush, and one of the hardest to see, so cunningly was it wrought out of spiders' webs and cocoons, and an outer covering of bark which made it look like a continuation of the branch.

But even the most carefully disguised nest does not deceive the small boy; the yellow robin's nest is quite as cleverly made to look like its surroundings as is the tree-runner's, and yet it is one of the nests most often the prey of the young savages. All through the bush here are the yellowbobs, and early in the season I found their nests again and again within hand reach; but, alas, the small boy always found them, too, and now in desperation the birds have taken to building quite high in the trees, and from a branch ever so far above me the big bright eyes of a Mrs. Yellowbob looked down at me with suspicion, as she snuggled down on her treasures, though by this time she should have been feeding fledglings. But, in spite of the ravaging small boy, there are dozens and dozens of

BLUE WREN

young birds abroad. On one twig, nestling closely together for support, sat a family of three diamond-birds, squawking hungrily for the food which their parents brought them in turns. Young honey-eaters are everywhere; spinebills, New Hollands, and white-cheeked, all with their characteristic beaks and flight, but still lacking the brighter plumage of the adult birds. In a bursaria bush I found Mr. and Mrs. Blue Wren, busily feeding young ones; such fluffy little brown balls they were, too, with absurdly long tails sticking up very straight. By and by some of them will blossom forth in the gorgeous blue and black suit of the father bird, but at present they all wear the safe and sombre brown of their mother.

In the branches of a turpentine I came across an infant who was not so happy as the blue wrens and diamonds birds. It was a big, fluffed-out baby pallid cockoo, who sat dismally bunched on a branch wailing miserably while a fierce war was waged around him. Evidently it was time for him to declare himself in his true colours, for his rightful parents kept flying

round and round the tree, calling loudly as they went. The foster parent, a black-cap, was wild with rage and fear; again and again she dashed at and in her fury drove away the cuckoos, who were many times her size. But though they would retreat before her onslaught, it was only to return with the same calling note. And always the baby bird wailed and wailed, as if miserable at having to choose.

I watched them for a long time, but the battle seemed to show no signs of ending, so I passed on, through the fence to the rocky ground leading down to the river.

The first thing that met my eye was a bright yellow orchid creeping in a long strand up the blackened trunk of a burnt gum. It hung on its ugly host with tender little arms, which held it firmly in place, and its delicate flowers stood out vividly against the dark background. Most of the orchids are over now, and it was a joy to find such a beauty. Indeed, most of the spring flowers are vanished, and the few hot days of summer have taken much of the colour from those that remain; here and there a sheltered spray of boronia speaks of past glory, but though the mass of it has vanished, the bush is still pink in patches with the pinkish purple flowers of the kunzea, which spreads all over the sandstone country. The red flowers of lambertia, the honey flower, show up bravely amongst the dark, spiked leaves, and here and there the red bottle brush (callistemon) lends a dash of colour. But the blaze of colour is past, and it is mostly smaller, quieter flowers

FLANNEL FLOWER

that are now in bloom. All through the scrubby undergrowth I found that quaint little creeper billardiera—better known to most of us as "puddings," on account of its fruit, which look like green roly-polies, and have served as dessert for many a dinner in our cubby-house days. At present it is in flower, and its dainty bell-blossoms of pale yellow creep everywhere.

It was right amongst the rocks and sandy patches that I found the best flowers of all, the flannel flowers. Such big, bright stars they were, too, as they gleamed against the dark grey rocks. In a few minutes I had gathered as many as I wanted, and then I turned my face homewards. The sun was burning right above my head now; the birds were silenced by the noonday heat, but the bush was noisy with the hum of flying things, cicadas, moths, and beetles. In the white blossoms of a tea-tree hundreds of pretty blue and green beetles were clustering, their shining wing-cases gleaming like bright enamel. Near the tea-trees grew dwarf apples, rich in velvet buds, with here and there a newly-opened creamy blossom, where bees lurked and drowsed. These red apple buds and the red new leaves of the gum saplings take the place of the gayer, brighter spring show. I picked a bunch of the shining gum leaves, and placed them with my flannel flowers; then, because I could not bear to see their beauty fade in the midday heat, I hurried up the hill and home again.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Billardiera scandens	Puddings
Pultenaea flexilis	Dwarf apples
Angophora cordifolia	
Melaleuca ericifolia	Tea-tree
Melaleuca styphelioides	Tea-tree
Kunzea capitata	
Leptospermum flavescens	Tea-tree
Callistemon lanceolatus	Bottlebrush
Actinotus helianthi	Flannel flower
Lambertia formosa	Honey flower
Galeola cassythoides	
Diuris aurea	
Caleana major	
Doryanthes excelsa	Gigantic lily

BIRDS BREEDING IN NOVEMBER.

Corone australis	Raven
Grallina picata	Peewee
Collyriocincla harmonica	Thrush
Lalage tricolor	White-shouldered caterpillar-eater
Rhipidura albiscapa	Fantail
Rhipidura tricolor	Wagtail
Sisura inquieta	Razor-grinder
Myiagra rubecula	Leaden flycatcher
Microeca fascinans	Jacky Winter
Gerygone albigularis	Native canary
Eopsaltria australis	Yellow-robin
Malurus superbus	Blue wren
Malurus lamberti	Lambert wren
Origma rubricata	Rock-warbler
Cisticola exilis	Grass-warbler
Acanthiza pusilla	Brown tit
Acanthiza nana	Yellow-bellied tit
Acanthiza lineata	Striped tit
Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit
Acanthiza reguloides	Bark-tit

Psophodes crepitans	Whip-bird
Ephthianura albifrons	White-fronted chat
Cracticus destructor	Butcher-bird
Pachycephala gutturalis	Yellow-breasted thickhead
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Falcunculus frontatus	Shrike-tit
Climacteris scandens	Tree-creeper
Climacteris leucophoea	White-throated tree-creeper
Sittella chrysoptera	Tree-runner
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Glyciphila fulvifrons	Tawny-crowned honey-eater
Ptilotis chrysops	Yellow-faced honey-eater
Ptilotis auricomis	Yellow-tufted honey-eater
Acanthorhynchus tenuirostris	Spine-billed honey-eater
Myzomela sanguinolenta	Blood-bird
Melithreptus lunulatus	Blackcap
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Pardalotus punctatus	Diamond-bird
Hirundo neoxena	Swallow
Artamus sordidus	Wood-swallow
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead
Anthus australis	Ground-lark
Podargus strigoides	Morepork
Dacelo gigas	Jackass
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid cuckoo
Cacomantis flabelliformis	Fan-tailed cuckoo
Cacomantis insperatus	Square-tailed cuckoo
Chalcococcyx plagosus	Bronze-cuckoo
Chalcococcyx basalis	Narrow-billed bronze-cuckoo
Turnix varia	Painted quail

December 1

THE proper time for a bush walk just now is at five o'clock in the morning; so to-day, while the sun was still flinging long shadows from the east, I was out in the garden ready for my walk. The garden itself was not wanting in charms at that early hour, with the bright faces of pansies smiling in a row, and sweet peas scenting the air. I looked round the beds hesitatingly. There was a good deal of delightful work to be done, and for a moment I wondered if I should not stay.

But only for a moment. A chirping note sounded behind me, and I looked round from the pansies just in time to see a Jacky Winter deposit a nice little moth in the wide-open bill of its baby, who was sitting on my garden fence. With his feathers loosely fluffed, the young bird looked big enough to be taking care of himself, but the mottled head and breast showed that he was still only an infant.

But, though he was only a very young bird, he was quite big enough to make my decision for me. The pansies and the sweet peas were fascinating, but who could stay in an ordinary garden when just a few minutes' walk away was a bush full of fluffy, darling baby birds! Not I. Almost ashamed of the minutes I had already wasted, I hurried through the gate and down the hill into the gully.

Oh, that gully! I almost had to shut my eyes as I came to

WARATAH

it. Across the clearing, where the grass seems always green, thousands of dandelions held up bright discs to the sun; just beyond, the early light blazed upon the vivid tips of the saplings, now no longer red, but turned to gleaming, burnished copper, and between and above and through all floated hundreds and hundreds of yellow butterflies. Never have I seen so many; the air was filled with their flittering wings, and as I walked I had to step carefully for fear of crushing them. Sometimes one would light upon a dead branch on the ground and fold its wings. Instantly the yellow would disappear, and in its place would be found what looked exactly like a dead brown leaf. But only a few rested; the others floated here, there, and everywhere, like living sunbeams. Even in the early morning light the picture was one of golden summer, and after gazing entranced for a few minutes I hastened instinctively across to the shelter of the trees.

Squawking Baby Kingfishers

Here I found the things I had come out to see. All round me sounded the feeble "peeks" and hushed "chirrups" of young birds and their parents. November and December might be called the "mother" months, so full is the bush just now of baby birds. The loud, gay songs of early

spring are rarely heard now; in their place comes the tender mother song and baby talk of the fond and anxious parents; for mother birds have a special tone for their little ones just as surely as have human mothers, and the voice of the baby bird is as distinct from its parents' as is the wail of a little baby from the voice of a woman.

Amongst the leaves around me I knew quite well that some young things were hiding, and judging from the fuss they were making, were evidently regarding me with terror. It did not take me long to find the first family—two young yellow bobs, huddling against the roots of a tree, where their baby dress of brown merged into the surroundings, so that but for their cries they would have been passed unnoticed. The anxious "cheep, cheep" of their golden-breasted mother as she flew from tree to tree showed that she also was aware of my presence. I did not want to harrow their feelings unnecessarily, so I moved away to where a young fantail cuckoo sat huddled on a dead bush "peeking" fretfully, while two little brown tits worked fussily to feed him.

A little way further on a native canary passed me with food in his bill, and I watched him enter a sapling, where I knew there hung a cosy nest with two hungry chicks inside. But almost every bird I saw was either carrying food or looking for it, for little birds need their breakfasts just as much as any other children. Two razor grinders flew hurriedly past to their nest high up in a tall gum, each with a morsel in its beak;

A full house !

YOUNG JACKY WINTERS ON NEST

a thrush went swiftly past, also carrying food to its nest in the hollow of a high tree. As I moved along towards the sandstone I heard a pathetic cry just above my head, and after some looking discovered two more baby Jacky Winters. They were younger than the one who had eaten his breakfast on my fence, but were already much too big for the tiny nest on which they huddled. It truly was "on" and not "in," for the little shallow nest soon ceases really to shelter the young birds. They saw me looking at them, and drew their heads back, trying to hide from sight. But, though they could no longer look at me, I could plainly see them as they bulged over the edges of their tiny home.

Down through the fence where the sandstone begins I had an experience very common in the mother months. I was walking quietly along, when suddenly, with an angry note, a bright olive bird flashed out from a bush beside me. It was the white-eared honey-eater, and I knew from the tone of her voice that she had babies close by. I stooped down to look for them, and immediately the bird flew almost against my face, and then to the ground a few yards ahead, fluttering along slowly, and dragging its wings painfully, as if they were broken. I advanced a step or two, but the bird for all her apparent helplessness always managed to keep ahead of me. On she fluttered, down the track, leading me further and further from her treasured darlings, then suddenly when she thought I was safely out of the way, with a cry she skimmed off into the bushes, and by a circular route went back to her babies.

It is a little trick to which most mother birds have recourse in the spring. The idea is that their apparent helplessness will tempt you to catch them, and so leave their babies unmolested. It is the natural mother instinct to protect its young at any cost; but unfortunately for the little birds, this very trick of the mother often attracts people's attention to their existence, instead of drawing them away. But I let the fond mother think she had deluded me, and went on my way. The cicadas were in full chorus by this time, floury bakers, double drummers, and the rest of them, and their song was almost deafening. But I managed to detect above their clamour the whispering note of the Lambert's blue wren—him with the chestnut shoulders on his blue and black coat. I stood patiently for ten minutes before I was rewarded by the sight of him flying up with a tiny fly in his bill, which was welcomed by a chorus of squeaks from a grey spider-flower bush. There I saw three of the very quaintest of all young birds, three tiny brown balls, no bigger than half my thumb, and each with a tiny tail standing straight up in ridiculous imitation of its parent.

The last family of baby birds I found was right up on the sandstone heights, where, in a stunted banksia, lay three half-fledged babies of the fulvous-fronted honey-eater. Three is an unusual number for a honey-eater's family, two being the regulation limit; but these three little brothers did not seem to mind being slightly crowded, and very happy they looked

snuggling together in their cosy cradle, every now and then opening wide their yellow gapes at the prospect of a feed.

But though there are so many young abroad, numbers of the birds are still building, some for the second or third time this season. In the forest country the leaden fly-catcher, which came south more than a month ago, has a beautiful cup-shaped nest, set in a dead branch of a tall tree. Another migratory bird, the reed-warbler, one of our sweetest singers, is also breeding, but I must go to the reed-beds to find it. In those same reed-beds will be found the wonderful little nest of the grass-warbler, an industrious little bird, which often covers its oval nest, made of fine grass, spiders' webs, and cocoons, with a big sheltering leaf stitched on with a silky substance in a marvellous manner. But the reed-beds are a long way from here, and I must return to my own district.

Here, the golden glory of the bush has departed, and now white is the reigning colour. One of the tea-trees is profusely in flower, covering whole paddocks; in its blossoms the beetles love to harbour, and they shine like enamel in the morning sun. Some gum trees also add their white blossom to the harmony, and the creamy flowers of the dwarf apple are bursting out from their red woolly buds. Then, of course, there are the most prized of all white wild flowers, the flannel flowers, which just now are out in profusion, and are to be found in sandy soil amongst the rocks, which make a telling background for the white stars. Close by grow two other highly

CHRISTMAS BELLS

prized flowers, the Christmas bush, just now covered with its white blossoms, which in a week or so will give place to the red fruit, commonly mistaken for the flower; and the Christmas bells, most happily named of all our native flowers. These bells grow in the most unpromising places, and their gorgeous red and yellow show up brightly against the sandy background they love.

Another conspicuous blossom just now is the big hibbertia; its flower is very like a yellow dog-rose, and it is sometimes called the "sand-rose," because it grows so freely on the sand by the shore. But as a similar species grows just as freely in the brush, the name is not altogether appropriate.

In the sandstone country there are several smaller flowers in evidence; the most noticeable is the pink stylidium, or trigger plant as it is called, on account of its long style which springs back if touched. The three-petalled fringed violet also shows brightly, its warm purple making a charming contrast to the grey sandy background.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Hibbertia volubilis	Yellow dog rose
Hibbertia dentata	
Pultenaea villosa	
Acacia decurrens	Green wattle
Ceratopetalum gummiferum	Christmas bush
Angophora cordifolia	Dwarf apple
Melaleuca nodosa	Tea-tree
Leptospermum flavescens	Tea-tree
Callistemon lanceolatus	Red bottlebrush

Actinotus helianthi	Flannel flower
Actinotus minor	Little flannel flower
Grevillea buxifolia	Grey spider-flower
Helichrysum diosmifolium	
Stylidium lineare	Trigger plant
Doryanthes excelsa	Gigantic lily
Blandfordia nobilis	Christmas bells
Thysanotus junceus	Fringed violet

BIRDS ARRIVING IN DECEMBER.

Micropus pacificus	White-rumped swift
Chaetura caudacuta	Spine-tailed swift
Glossopsittacus concinnus	Musk lorikeet

BIRDS BREEDING IN DECEMBER.

Rhipidura albiscapa	Fantail
Rhipidura tricolor	Wagtail
Myiagra rubecula	Leaden flycatcher
Malurus lamberti	Lambert wren
Cisticola exilis	Grass warbler
Acanthiza nana	Yellow-bellied tit
Ephthianura albifrons	White-fronted chat
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Ptilotis chrysops	Yellow-faced honey-eater
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead
Anthus australis	Ground-lark
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher
Cacomantis insperatus	Square-tailed cuckoo
Synoicus australis	Swamp-quail
Turnix varia	Painted quail

ERIOSTEMON

January 1

DO you remember the story of the cicada who took the place of the broken note in the poet's lyre, and "saved the singer from defeat, with her chirrup low and sweet?"

It's a pretty story but could not have been told of an Australian cicada. He would never be satisfied to be merely one note of a song, nor even the whole song. He is content with nothing less than a full chorus, a cantata, an oratorio, or whatever is the singing that makes the most noise. He will brook no interference; he must have the whole stage to himself, and anything else that dares to interrupt is sung loudly down, while he goes through his summer performance. He has been in fine fettle during the past month—or perhaps I had better say they, for there are millions of him. They, then, have certainly taken possesion of the bush during the past few weeks, and everything has had to give way before them. The bush tracks, and even the side paths of the high roads, are riddled with holes, out of which the creatures crept from their

winter sleep a couple of months ago. The fences are scaly with the dry shells shed by them, while the gum trunks, especially the ironbarks, are spotted from head to foot with the same brown husks. On grey, damp days, I have found dozens of the newly-hatched—or should it be fledged?—cicadas clinging helplessly to posts and tree trunks, waiting for their wings to dry. At such times they fall an easy prey to the ants, who devour them alive, and to their other enemy, the small boy. But though numbers perish in early youth, there are still left myriads upon myriads to swell the summer chorus, to drown the voices of the birds, and to tempt small boys to climb all sorts of impossible places in pursuit of them.

They have certainly done their best to make the past month what it has been, a noisy, noisy month. The bush has been robbed of much of its peacefulness since December came in; for, added to the deafening song of the cicada, and the shout of the boy in pursuit of him, there has been the invading army of flower-gatherers and picnickers, who have arrived in hordes, leaving desolation and many tins in their wake. They have dragged the maiden-hair up by its roots, torn the Christmas bushes to shreds, and plucked every Christmas bell for miles around. They have strewn their papers, tins, and fruit-peelings all over the sheltered spots and shady corners, and have thrown their broken bottles into the creeks and gullies. They have made the day hideous with their shrieks and noisy laughter, and the night a thing of pain with their camping songs.

But now the holidays are past, and the holiday-makers have returned to their daily round, leaving the cicadas in full possession. And, though they have scorned and insulted her, no doubt Nature has dropped a tiny gift upon each one of them, which, quite unconsciously, they will carry with them through the workaday world for many a day to come.

And now, just when the holiday-makers have left the bush to recover its accustomed peace, come still greater enemies—the hot wind and the bush fires. On every side the horizon is hidden in a cloud of smoke, and even the gum leaves are drooping beneath the intense heat of the last few days. But though, when standing on the top of the hill, one sees nothing but a smoky haze, down in my own particular gully the only sign of the fire is the pungent smell which comes on the wind. It is far too hot through the daytime to venture out with any pleasure; but this evening, after sunset, I wended my way down into the cool of the gully. On the fence just at the bottom of the hill I saw four young wood-swallows, with mottled grey backs, sitting huddled together, evidently feeling the heat very badly, while a little further on a young rufous-breasted thickhead and his father sat gaping for breath in a tea tree. Only a week ago I took my camera and photographed that same little thickhead and his brother, then just out of their nest, and two more confiding little birds I never met. They let me catch them and stroke them without any trouble, and one sat comfortably on the back of my hand while I

walked about and fixed my camera. I got a picture of the two little chaps sitting side by side, calling to their father to bring them something to eat. But to-night only one little brother was to be seen, and I am afraid that the other must have succumbed to the heat.

DWARF APPLE

Indeed, the whole bird world seemed to have been overcome by the weather; there were very few to be seen, and those that were about skulked silently in the shadow. As I passed

down where the soakage from a garden on the hill creeps out, two peewees flew shrieking up from the moist spot, but even their noisy voices seemed less harsh than usual; and further down, amongst the white-blossomed bursaria bushes near the creek—now as dry as any road—a fan-tailed cuckoo wailed more fretfully than ever as two brown tits did their best to appease his hunger.

Although it is really more than midsummer, there are still a good many baby birds about. A week ago I saw a black-cap honey-eater feeding a pallid cuckoo, and the week before that I found a fantail's nest with young ones almost ready to fly. On the same day I found a kingfisher's nest with one pure white egg in a hole in a red gum, and in another week or so there will be the squawking of baby kingfishers coming from that tree. Last Saturday, when walking over the heath towards the sea, I came upon three of the sweetest of all baby birds, three little chats or chitwees, as the boys call them, which had just left their cup-shaped nest in a low thick bush.

The red gums just now are things of beauty, with their dry bark dropping off in great pieces, leaving the soft flesh pink of the new skin below. This evening, as I walked amongst them, their trunks were flushed from palest pink to deep blood-red in the fierce sunset glow, making a magic wood of my peaceful valley. Amongst the rocks, where the creek ran three months ago, I found two snow-white bushes gleaming in the twilight; they were blueberry ashes (Elaeocarpus cyaneus), which later

on will be covered with dark-blue berries. There is not a more ornamental tree in the bush than this, with its glossy

A remarkably fine child!

TIT FEEDING YOUNG CUCKOO

leaves and wealth of white blossoms, which very much resemble the garden deutzia, and it is a wonder it is not more cultivated

by gardeners. How the bushes came to be left undisturbed by the picnickers is a wonder, unless they were too busy tearing to pieces the Christmas bushes, mutilated remains of which marked the vandal's progress all the way.

Although it was late when I reached the spot where the creek should join the main stream, it was not too dark to see the rosy flush of a tall coachwood in full blossom. The coachwood is first cousin to the Christmas bush and though its leaves are bigger its calyx is just as red and effective as that of the better-known species. Evidently the picnickers hadn't penetrated so far down the gully, as the tree was absolutely untouched, and stood in perfect beauty in the evening light. Near by, the tall flower spikes of the wild parsley gleamed white in the gloaming. This flower, orchid-like in its creamy beauty, is out in profusion just now, and is one of the few blossoms in evidence on the sandstone that has been robbed of its Christmas bells.

The daylight had faded into moonlight as I turned for home. The moon, red through the smoke haze, wrapped the bush path in mystic shadows, which seemed to hide all sorts of wondrous secrets. In the distance a boobook owl called softly; from the bushes close by came the stirrings and sleepy chirpings of tired birds. A little cool whisper of a breeze ran down the gully to tell of the approaching southerly; when I reached the top of the hill, the clump of tall apple-trees (Angophora intermedia) that crowns the summit was waving

blossom-laden branches in the grateful breeze which had arrived from the south.

The sweetest of all baby birds!
CHATS (on Banksia cone)

These apples, which most people mistake for gum trees, are the most noticeable flowers in the bush this month; and up

in the northern suburbs whole paddocks are white with them, as they stretch their graceful branches over the white shrubs of the flowering box just breaking out into blossom.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Bursaria spinosa	White box or blackthorn
Elaeocarpus cyaneus	Blueberry ash
Acacia decurrens	Green wattle
Ceratopetalum gummiferum	Christmas bush
Ceratopetalum apetalum	Coachwood
Angophora intermedia	Apple tree
Lomatia silaifolia	Wild parsley
Blandfordia nobilis	Christmas bells
Thysanotus junceus	Fringed violets
Dipodium punctatum	Native hyacinth

BIRDS BREEDING IN JANUARY.

Rhipidura albiscapa	White-shafted fantail
Ephthianura albifrons	White-fronted chat
Cisticola exilis	Grass warbler
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Dicaeum hirundinaceum	Mistletoe-bird
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher
Synoicus australis	Swamp quail
Turnix varia	Painted quail

February 1

ON Saturday we took our breakfast out. The bush is always sweet and fresh at 6 o'clock in the morning, even though the spell of dry weather has scorched and withered the last remaining signs of spring's fairness. The glade which awhile ago was green and grassy is now brown and parched. but the dry grass makes a comfortable seat, and in the creek bed, which has been guiltless of water these three months past, we found a cosy resting place and a good spot for our fire. A breakfast of hard-boiled eggs, fresh pears, and muscatel grapes is a feast for the gods when eaten beneath the shade of turpentines, with the blue smoke curling up from the little fire where the billy boils; and we sat in lazy contentment, dawdling over our meal and watching a Jacky Winter in chase of his. Quietly he sits on a branch, his bright eyes watching all around for his prey. A little moth comes fluttering by. Jacky skims the air towards him, the moth dodges, but the bird is too quick, and a click of the mandibles tells us that so much breakfast is safely caught. Then he flies back to his branch to eat at his leisure and watch for the next course.

Then a yellow-bob came to visit us, and perched on the side of a tree trunk, watched us with big friendly eyes. He is always very inquisitive about picnics, and comes to investigate whenever he sees a cloth laid on the grass. There is no bird

in the bush more friendly than he, and in a little while he was hopping round us picking up the crumbs gently scattered for his benefit.

Suddenly from the clump of tea-trees behind us came a whirring noise, and a large light bird flew rapidly by to the fence across the green, where he perched clumsily with an upward flick of his tail. It was a young pallid cuckoo in his transition dress of speckled brown and white, which looks rather as if he had been liberally splashed with the white-wash brush. He was probably the same chap we had seen last month being fed by chickups, but though we watched for some time we saw no sign of the foster parents. Although the pallid cuckoos have been silent now for some weeks past they have not yet gone off on their northward flight, and no doubt the parents of this young fellow were somewhere near, ready to call him when the time came

Watching with big curious eyes

YELLOWBOB BESIDE NEST

for departure. There were no other birds about the glade, which is generally so gay with songs and flutterings. The dry weather has driven them all further down the creek bed, where they can find a little water. So when we had idled to our heart's content over our tea and fruit we hid our basket beneath the white-flowered bursaria bushes and started off down the gully.

Such a quiet gully it was. One could hardly believe it was the same place that three months ago blazed and glowed in all its spring gorgeousness. But, though the gay splendour had departed, there was plenty to watch and wonder at, for there is never a month in the year when the marvels of the bush cease. Fruits and seeds have taken the place of flowers; not the luscious wild fruits of tropical climes, but strange, odd-shaped ones, much more interesting in appearance. There isn't much to eat in our bush, but there is plenty to admire. The needlebushes are developing their extraordinary wooden fruit of purple-brown; the big grape-like berries of one of the gee-bungs hang in decorative clusters of purple-green amongst their slender green leaves; while from the delicate trailing

GEEBUNGS

greenery of the blackfellow's orange hang the small yellow balls which give it its name. The blueberry ash, which two months ago was white with blossom, is now covered with berries already ripening to the required colour.

There are still a few flowers in bloom. The white thorn, or Bursaria, is the most noticeable thing in the bush, as it will be for the next few months, and its tiny blossoms hold a nutty fragrance that makes it a very acceptable flower for the house—if you don't mind the thorns—in this season of scarcity. Then there is one of the geebungs in flower, too, with deep yellow spikes of bloom amongst its bright green needle leaves. Wild parsley, too, rears its creamy white flower heads amongst the green, but except for these, and a pale wattle, and a small mauve weed which grows all along the roadsides, blossoming time is done.

For it is the time of maturity. Seeds and fruit have taken the place of flowers; and young trees have put off their infant leaves of red and copper, and have donned their grown-up gowns of green; while the trunks of the older trees have shed their last year's sheaths, and emerged in splendid garments of purest cream, or mottled greys and reds and blues.

The birds, too, have passed the baby age. No longer comes the sweet twittering of mother-talk and baby answerings. The families have long since left their nests, and are travelling round together. Their education is in full swing; the parent birds do not now carry flies and grubs to hungry waiting mouths, for

Big enough to take care of himself !

YOUNG YELLOWBOB

the chicks are all hunting for themselves. But they are still in family groups; and though the young ones can use their wings and catch their dinners, the big world is full of unknown dangers, and they fly back to their parents at the first sound of alarm. Half-way down the gully we met a family of yellow-bobs, the two youngsters distinguishable from their parents by the streaks of brown still discernible on the coats of green and grey and yellow. A family of thrushes played about in the tree tops, the glad voices of the parents ringing out every now and then in encouragement.

It is really a month of *debutantes*, for all the young birds are entering into the arena of life, and are trying their little voices in the universal song. At present they are all garbed in their distinctive gowns, which, by-and-bye, they will change for the more conspicuous livery of grown-ups. By this time next year they will all be bringing out sons and daughters of their own, but now youth and freedom are theirs.

Altogether it is a fascinating time in the bush, this time of transition and fulfilment. And already on some of the early wattles are to be seen the tiniest of tiny buds, which tell of the flowers to come, and of the eternal cycle which never ceases.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Bursaria spinosa	White box, blackthorn
Acacia linearis	
Lomatia salaifolia	Wild parsley
Persoonia pinifolia	
Eranthemum variabile	

FRUIT.

Elaeocarpus cvaneus	Blueberry ash
Hakea acicularis	
Hakea pugioniformis	
Persoonia hirsuta	Geebungs
Eustrephus Browni	Blackfellow's oranges

BIRDS DEPARTING IN FEBRUARY.

Myiagra rubecula	Leaden flycatcher
Myzomela sanguinolenta	Blood-bird
Cuculus pallidus	Pallid cuckoo
Cacomantis insperatus	Square-tailed cuckoo

BIRDS BREEDING IN FEBRUARY.

Dicaeum hirundinaceum	Mistletoe-bird
Synoicus australis	Swamp quail
Turnix varia	Painted quail

March 1

IT has been a wonderful February. Instead of four weeks of steaming muggy days and stifling nights, we have had long breaks of cool, fresh days, and nights when a blanket was a comfort, with just a few odd days here and there to remind us of what a Sydney February really can be.

And yesterday the last day of the month broke in a thick white mist that shrouded the world in a winter pall. Quite cold and shivery it was, too, and altogether more like May or June than the second month of the year.

It was a very fascinating morning for a walk, and by seven o'clock we had had a cup of tea, donned our coats and thickest boots, and were on our way down the gully. Of all the beautiful bush times there are, I know of none more delicious than an early misty morning, when the mist is not cold and dank, but soft and cool, as it was this morning. It rests on your cheek like a fairy down, damps your hair into curl, cools and freshens your whole body, and sends you swinging along your path with head erect, sniffing the fresh earth smells all round you.

TEA TREE

We were not the only ones in the gully; down in the clearing, now vividly green, we came across a little family party, father, mother, and three children, all busily employed picking mushrooms. A full basket was the reward of their labour, and they told us there were more further on across the paddock. But though mushrooms have a charm of their own not to be denied, their fascination was not strong enough to draw us from the path which leads down by the fence, through the sliprails, into the part where the tall blackbutts grow. Up in their high tops two butcher birds were calling to each other, the rich contralto notes of the first bird answered in rippling mezzo by his mate. The butcher birds are free from the housekeeping cares which kept them down in the valleys during the summer, and have come back to the ridge for the winter; and now every morning is made musical by their ringing voices. Most of the birds have finished with family cares for the season, and with the young ones launched on their ways, the parent birds are taking it easy, and sing with a freer, surer tone than has been heard since the nesting commenced. The path beneath the blackbutts led us through into the rocky scrub where the stunted apples and banksias grow in a thickly-matted mass. The apple trees are covered with their fascinating fruit; the creamy blossom has vanished, and in its place are those quaint brown seed-pods with their little caps, now vividly red, which in a week or so will split up into three sections and let the little seeds out. The banksias, too,

are fascinating at present, with their new cones forming; they look such soft, velvety things, these embryo bottle brushes, but are really quite hard and knobby to the touch. The white-cheeked honey-eaters love this patch of apple and banksia; dozens of them were darting about, playing chasings through the bushes and calling to each others as they flew, "You saucy girl, you saucy girl." Spiders seem to love this patch, too, and every few yards we had to step aside to avoid breaking down a beautiful dew-bespangled web. The mist was clearing now, and the sunshine falling through the trees touched the spider-webs into a mesh of gleaming pearls, in the midst of which the spider lurked in his den, a curled-up leaf.

MOREPORKS

It showed us something else more interesting than the spider's web. In a big grey gum at the edge of the track to the gully, we saw one of Nature's most marvellous devices for protecting her creatures. Jutting out from the main trunk was what appeared to be a broken limb, but a closer glance

NEST OF PAINTED QUAIL

showed that it was a bird, or rather two birds. Cuddling very close together were two frog-mouths, or moreporks, sitting bolt upright like stiff pieces of wood, the striped grey of their coats barely distinguishable from the bark of the tree. A hundred

people would have passed right by without seeing them, but the bush lover's eye is quick to detect, and we enjoyed the quaint sight before us. These birds, by the way, do not utter the "more-pork" sound popularly ascribed to them, but which really belongs to the boobook owl.

Further on, where the slope drops down to the creek, we roused a family of quail. The little ones, half-grown, scuttled quickly to cover, and immediately became invisible, but the parents kept on ahead of us, running with lifted heads and a funny tip-toe effect. We followed them for some yards, keeping them easily in sight; then, when they thought we were safely out of reach of their chicks, they disappeared in the bushes and doubled back.

There were very few flowers to be seen; a stray blossom of pultenaea, or grevillea, remained here and there to tell of vanished glory, but the only plants really in full flower were a pale creamy wattle and a tea-tree, which raised long spikes of blossom from its dull green leaves. The wattle was drenched with dew, but a slight shake sent the drops scattering, and shed a nutty sweetness on the air.

It is the resting time in the bush; the time when birds and flowers and insects, having all produced their share of life and beauty, rest for a while before beginning once again the joyful task allotted them by Mother Nature.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Acacia linearis	
Leptospermum scoparium	Tea-tree
Lobelia gracilis	

BIRDS DEPARTING IN MARCH.

Lalage tricolor	White-shouldered caterpillar-eater
Gerygone albigularis	Native canary
Pachycephala rufiventris	Rufous-breasted thickhead
Hirundo neoxena	Swallow
Micropus pacificus	White-rumped swift
Chaetura caudacuta	Spine-tailed swift
Halcyon sanctus	Kingfisher

BIRDS BREEDING IN MARCH.

Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Meliornis sericea	White-cheeked honey-eater
Glyciphila fulvifrons	Tawny-crowned honey-eater
Synoicus australis	Swamp quail

April 1

AT six o'clock this morning the sky was pink from rim to rim with rosy clouds, that sent their glow on to the tips of the treetops and wakened all the birds of the neighbourhood into song. Not that there are very many birds about just now, for the northward flight has been in progress for several weeks past, and many of the birds have gone to warmer climes for the winter months. The cuckoos have all left the neighbourhood, and we miss the ringing notes of the pallid and the brush cuckoos, and the melancholy wail of the bronze. The native canaries, too, have departed northwards, and their running song no longer makes music amongst the saplings in the gully. Quite at the beginning of the month the blood-birds (red-headed honey-eater) had taken their flight, and their gleaming red and black shone no longer amongst the gum-tips.

But though so many birds have gone, there are still enough left to greet the dawn with a chorus of song. The Jacky Winters are gaining in vigour as the cool days approach, for their song is always at its fullest and sweetest in the winter; the blue wrens, with their families, join in united efforts to swell the chorus; thrushes send their ringing notes across from tree to tree; razor-grinders utter their sweet, soft note, so different to the whirring, grinding one which gives them their name; and the kookaburras are most insistent of all in their rejoicing that the cool days are coming.

It was the kookaburras that woke me this morning. A family of them has been brought up down in the gully, and now that the youngsters are able to travel round with their parents the whole family comes up every dawn-tide and greets the sun from a tall gum-tree just outside my garden fence. There they give loud expression to their enjoyment of life; the old ones are glad that their family is safely reared, and the young ones are glad they are alive, and so they lift their voices, and laugh and laugh at the whole world. This morning I felt that they were laughing at me for being such a lie-a-bed, when the sky was all rosy-flushed and the world was so sweet. It was ludicrous. Even though from my verandah bed I can see

In serious mood!

KOOKABURRA

away over tree-tops and paddocks to the mountains, it is not the same as being out in the morning. I don't like to be laughed at, even by kookaburras, who laugh at everyone and everything, so I jumped out of bed, and in less than half an hour was on my way down to the bush.

I might as well confess that it was not only the kookaburras and the charm of the morning that allured me out. I wanted to find some flowers to fill my vases, for my garden is very bare at present, and I have to depend almost entirely on the spoils of the bush. There are no flowers now in the gully, and I knew that I should have to go on to the sandstone before I should find any. Just where the two types of country meet and merge I came to a regular wattle grove; not the golden wattle of the poets, but the soft, creamy sort which has a beauty of its own. There were two kinds growing all together and a few weeks back they were in full beauty; but now they are nearly over, and the ground beneath was strewn with the creamy powder of their flowers. But I found two other wattles a little further on, which were in full bloom—the juniper-leafed wattle, with its pale gold balls, which was too prickly to pick; and the Port Jackson wattle, with its leaflets dark above and pale below, of which I picked a bunch.

Pushing on down towards the river, I came across a perfect bower of blossoms. Amongst the big grey rocks and beneath the scraggly, scribbly gums there grew a thick mass of the daintiest white blossom; its umbels of tiniest white flowers

swayed on the end of slender stems, and the light soft breeze turned all towards me. It was the wild parsnip, one of the freest autumn flowerers. In bright contrast to its fragile paleness, the deep pink stars of the crowea shone amongst the grey rocks—its favourite habitat. It has not yet reached its zenith, and the unfolded buds lend a warm note of colour to the scene. Beyond the rocks, but still in the picture, was a thick clump of tea-tree covered with long flower-spikes of pink and white blossom. Some of the bushes had nearly finished blooming, and the bright red of their seeds made vivid contrast. It was a corner that, in its delicacy of colouring, suggested spring rather than autumn; but the supreme disregard for the seasons is one of the chief charms of our bush flowers. Spring, summer, autumn, or winter, there are always some of them making the land lovely with their sweetness and colour.

In a very short time I had my arms as full as they would hold. At least, I thought so, until I caught sight, just ahead, of a tall banksia, covered with gorgeous flower-spikes, their rich bronze-red glowing in the morning light. It was Banksia ericifolia, one of the handsomest of the honeysuckles, or bottle brushes as they are alternately called. There is, I think, no more decorative plant in the bush than this particular banksia, when the botttle brushes are newly-opened and the little hooked styles are deep red with yellow tips. A bunch of them arranged with their own green in a big bronze jar is a sight to gladden a whole household, and whether they have the plain green paper

of my study or the brown of my hall for background, they are always a much-to-be-desired decoration. So, laying the other blossoms down in a cool spot, I was soon stretching on tip-toe to pick the coveted beauties.

As I was pushing through some thick undergrowth to reach a specially fine one, a bird flew out past my face with a frightened, scolding note. It was a New Holland honey-eater, of which there were, as usual, a number about. From the tone of his note I suspected a nest, and after a few minutes' search came upon the little cradle, set low in another banksia, with two half-fledged baby birds cuddling together at the bottom. The New Holland and the white-cheeked honey-eaters both have a distinct autumn breeding season, and as the scrubby banksia country is their favourite nesting place, I looked about for more nests. After half an hour's search I was rewarded by finding another New Holland's with one egg, and a half-finished nest; also two white-cheeked honey-eaters', one with two creamy-pink eggs and one with two bare little nestlings.

BANKSIA

On my way home I came across one of the little tragedies of nature. I was crossing a cleared space, and on the grass ahead of me saw a bird fluttering along in a peculiar way. I recognised it at once as a Jacky Winter, but I had never seen one flying in that manner. As I drew nearer I saw the reason why. The poor little thing had a wounded wing. I stooped to pick him up to examine it closer, when immediately an angry parent flew down from a tree and, scolding loudly, brushed quite close to my face, while her mate chattered furiously from the tree. I caught the little sufferer, which fluttered violently for a few minutes, then subsided into frightened quietness. I saw at once what had happened. The shot from a catapult had wounded the shoulder joint, but the wing was not broken, though it was stiff with blood and needed relaxing. I decided to carry the little bird home and doctor it. My flowers, which I had laid on the ground, were as much as my hands would hold, but I have a side pocket in my bush skirt with a flap which buttons over. Into this I carefully put the Jacky, who nestled down with a frightened little peek; then I went on my way pursued by the angry anxious notes of the parents.

A little warm water and boracic worked wonders with the wounded wing, and after keeping the little bird all day in an empty cage (to which he seemed to grow almost reconciled after a time, especially when I brought him some little white grubs), I carried him back to the clearing and let him loose. He was immediately greeted by his parents, who flew round and

round in wild excitement. After a few timid ineffectual efforts the young bird managed to flutter up into a sapling, where I left him, feeling that there was no longer any cause for fear of his safety, and that by the morning he would be well enough to fly out of range of the marauding small boys and their catapults.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Crowea saligna	
Acacia linearis	
Acacia linifolia	
Acacia discolor	Port Jackson wattle
Acacia juniperina	
Leptospermum scoparium	Tea-tree
Trachymene ericoides	Wild parsnip
Grevillea punicea	Red spider-flower
Grevillea buxifolia	Grey spider-flower
Banksia ericifolia	Honeysuckle, or bottle brush
Lambertia formosa	Honey flower
Lobelia gracilis	
Scaevola hispida	Snake flower

BIRDS ARRIVING IN APRIL.

Acanthochaera carunculata	Gill-bird

BIRDS DEPARTING IN APRIL.

Glossopsittacus concinnus	Musk lorikeet

BIRDS BREEDING IN APRIL.

Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Meliornis sericea	White-cheeked honey-eater
Aegintha temporalis	Redhead

May 1

THERE are some days that make you laugh; days when little white clouds chase each other across a smiling sky, when little breezes play round the tree tops and tickle the leaves into laughter; when wavelets skip and dance in the harbour, and birds gush and gurgle in the bush; when the whole world laughs with joy and you must laugh with it.

To-day was just such a magic day; it came in with a frolicking breeze, and was welcomed by a burst of bird laughter. Blue wrens hopped cheerily across my grass plot; chickups called with throaty happy notes from the saplings. Jacky Winters were insistent on the fact that it was "sweeter, sweeter, sweeter;" and down in the valley the voice of the thrush

CALLISTEMON

rang out with a happy peal. Everything was calling—"Come and play; come and be happy;" and when the whole world calls like that, who am I to stay at home and work?

It was a day made for joy, and for the bush. There were many things I might have done in town. There was the procession, there was the "Commem.," there was Hospital Saturday, and football matches, and matinees, and a dozen other things that are counted pleasure. But, on the other hand, there was the bush, with its thousand joys, calling with insistent voice—and the bush won.

The calendar tells us that May is the first of the winter months, and according to all traditions the bush should now be bare and silent. There is not certainly the wild luxuriance of spring and summer, but the bush is far from bare; the Port Jackson wattle is in full bloom, and its pale cream balls and glossy green leaves are just as beautiful in their way as the more striking blooms of the golden spring flowers. Amongst the rocks down near the river this wattle grows in great soft masses against a background of sassafras and turpentine; out on the coast it grows less luxuriantly, but everywhere about Sydney it is to be seen—and smelt, for it is very sweet. There are two other pale wattles going off now, but here and there a branch of blossom remains to bear witness to the fact that wattles do not all belong to spring.

The grey rocks in the gully, which give such pleasure to

the eye in the hot dry summer months, would look very dour and cold just now were it not for the glowing pink blossoms of the crowea, which cast a cheerful gleam through the shadows, and catch on their round pink faces the glinting sunbeams that come dancing down through the leaves. For the spirit of laughter has followed me down into the valley, and even the grey rocks smile as the shadows of the leaves flicker playfully over them. Higher up the bank a host of red spider flowers jig like living things to the music of the wind. The grevilleas are splendid winter bloomers; and the red one is particularly profuse just now, and very gay is the note of colour it lends to the landscape.

But sweet though it was down in the valley, it was a day for high places and sunshine. I crossed the creek, now quite dry, and climbed up the other side. Here I found a clump of joyful colour, where the brown and yellow pea-blossoms of the bossiaea looked like butterflies dancing on their quaint flat stems. Close by the last blue flowers of the lobelia swayed brightly in the breeze, looking each moment as if the slender stems must snap and let the flowers dance off. As I climbed higher I found a few stray blossoms of the red epacris, which seems to flower all the year round, and when I reached the uplands once again, I was greeted with the sight of the "five corner" with pale green blossoms opening to the sun.

It was while I was looking at the quaint tubular blossoms of my childhood's friend that I heard a familiar note that also

seemed to belong to long ago. "Sck, sck," it went, and in a moment by flew a red-head, or, as serious people would call him, a red-eyebrowed finch. But it wasn't at all a serious day, so I called him red-head, and followed him softly through the bushes. He did not take much notice of me, but flew on to a thick needlebush, where high amongst the prickly leaves I saw the familiar long, retort-shaped nest. As he approached I could hear a very faint squeaking, and knew that at the end of that long nest some little birdlings were waiting hungrily for the seed which their father was bringing.

I went on my way with a song at my heart, glad that I had met this little friend of my childhood on this playing day.

YOUNG HONEY-EATERS

And never was there such a day for playing. According to all traditions winter should be sad and silent, and there should be no birds with happy song. But this dear, contrary land of ours loves to upset traditions, and instead of flying off to summer quarters, or skulking in the bushes, lots of birds are trilling forth their sweetest songs. There are very few now burdened with domestic cares. The white-cheeked and New Holland honey-eaters still have eggs and young ones to look after, and a few belated redheads are bringing out their families; but the majority of birds are free to enjoy life, and though many have migrated, there is a chorus of full bird voices such as has not been heard since the early spring. All through the summer we heard nothing but baby talk; now the parents are singing in their normal voices, and the young birds now well grown, are also trying theirs. And if the chorus is not as complete as in the springtide, there is nothing sad and melancholy about those bird notes that ring through bush and gully, and tell the world that though summer is over and winter is here, there is still plenty of sunshine and joy in this beautiful land of ours.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Crowea saligna	
Pimelea linifolia	
Bossiaea heterophylla	
Acacia discolor	Port Jackson wattle
Acacia linearis	
Acacia linifolia	
Callistemon lanceolatus	Bottlebrush

Grevillea punicea	Red spider-flower
Styphelia longifolia	Five-corners
Styphelia tubiflora	
Styphelia laeta	
Leucopogon microphyllus	White beards
Wahlenbergia gracilis	Blue bell
Eranthemum variabile	

BIRDS BREEDING IN MAY.

Menura superba	Lyre-bird

June 1

HONEY-FLOWER

IT is too wet now to go out in the very early morning, for this is the season of heavy dews and soft white mists. Every morning the valley is filled with white clouds, which mark the river bed and sometimes hide the hills as well. The grass and trees are drenched almost till noon, and even in the middle of the morning if I venture down my gully to gather ferns I feel like the young man in the "Elegy"—

Brushing with hasty steps the dews away.

There is a great charm in feeling like a person in a poem, and there is a distinct joy in wading through dew-wet grass and shaking down the drops from the laden branches; but for a good, comfortable bush walk the afternoon is the best time just now.

So as early as possible after lunch I set out. I turned my back on the gully, where now there is nothing to be found but maiden-hair, crossed the railway line, and struck out to the east. There was a warmth in the air; not the decadent warmth of an unseasonable autumn day, but a gentle, caressing glow that was almost a foretaste of spring. Perhaps it was the

wattles coming into bloom in the gardens along the road which completed the illusion, but certainly I had a distinct spring feeling in my blood, and I meant to see if there was any sign of spring in the bush.

My last bush walk had been almost a sad one, everything was so dry; but the rain had come since then, and after it the heavy dews, and I felt justified in expecting to see some flowers. It was pleasant after my last crackly tramp to feel the leaves soft and moist underfoot, so I chose the deepest and dampest gully I could find. As I picked my way along the rocky path that could scarcely be called a track, pink crowea glowed on all sides, and, though I knew crowea to be truly a winter flower, my hopes of spring blooms ran high. And I had not hoped in vain; for out of the sheltered tangle, still dripping with the morning dew, peeped many shy flowers, not yet in their full spring splendour, but giving promise of the glory to come. Bush things do not seem to fully recognise the existence of a winter season. On the bleak hill-tops they may be suppressed, but give them a little shelter and a little moisture and they will always do their best to make June look like August.

Three wattles in three different stages showed up boldly against the green background of the creek bed. The slender-leaved wattle was nearly over, only a few pale blossoms remaining, but the Port Jackson wattle was still in full swing. Many of its balls of yellow floss had been matted together by the rain, but fresh clusters of a deeper gold told a tale of

happier times. On a little flat by the creek the sweet-scented wattle had burst into bloom, and as I gathered its fragrant spikes I rolled its name round my tongue. "Suaveolens," the men of science call it, and for once they have found a happy name. The word shapes itself softly and sweetly from the lips, just as the flower breaks gently and deliciously from its full round bud. Other wattles may show more riotous masses of colour, but none is so sweet as this gentle plant, rearing a slender grey stem above the undergrowth to bear a modest head of creamy blossom, which delicately scents each passing breeze.

TETRATHECA

Underfoot the deep pink four-petalled flower of tetratheca lent a touch of colour to the grass, and with it grew the little flannel flower, which seems to bloom throughout the year; here and there its larger cousin put out a sickly bloom, miserably unlike its summer crop. The green-flowered five-corner was in full bloom, and the red-blossomed species was everywhere among the rocks. This last is an unsatisfactory little flower; though its blossoms are a charming colour, they always look as if they were just going off. But

the spinebills seemed perfectly satisfied with them, for they darted among them everywhere with sharp, clapping wings, dipping their slender bills deep into the tubular blossoms.

Another quaint flower I found among the rocks was chloanthes; it has no other name. Its crinkly leaves give it a mossy look, and form a soft, subdued background for the queer little pale green, bell-shaped flowers. As I stooped to pick it a glimpse of pale mauve caught my eye, and I gasped with astonishment. An orchid, a caladenia—surely here was the spring I was seeking! But on making towards it I found it was no orchid, but only a washed-out snake-flower, which fell from its stalk at my touch. "Scaevola hispida" is the name botanists give it, but we always knew it as snake-flower when we were children, and there was a tradition amongst us that to eat the blossom was a certain antidote to snakebite.

Leaving the tangle of undergrowth behind me I passed on and came out on the brink of a rocky precipice which overlooked the junction of two deep gorges; down beyond gleamed the blue waters of Middle Harbour; round about me grew thickly a tall needlebush, covered with tiny cream blossoms; it is the needlebush which has the smallest of flowers, yet its seeds are about the largest; tangled in amongst the needlebush, and spreading out over the rocks, the white shafts of the heath-like lysinema climbed to a prodigious height, some spikes being three to four feet tall. It was a lovely picture, the grey rocks and pale flowers, lit by the afternoon sun, and

I stretched myself full length on the rock, humming the line:—"What is so rare as a day in June?"

The answer came back very quickly from a butcher-bird, which sent his song up from the valley below; his ringing notes were immediately answered by his mate from the other side of the gully, and I lay and listened with delight to the sweet duet. It was a duet with an occasional chorus, in which thrushes, yellowbobs, spinebills, and chickups all joined at intervals. Even the little rock-warblers joined their chirrup to the choir, as they hopped about the rocks, coming quite close to me as I lay silently listening.

But suddenly the chorus was disturbed by a more powerful note, which came round and ringing from the valley. I sat up quickly; there was no mistaking that note—it was the lyre bird's. Then in a flash I remembered again that it was June, and that June is the time when the lyre bird breeds. Supposing I should find the nest? I knew the bird built somewhere in these gullies; time and again I had heard their voices as they mimicked the other birds of the bush, and so wild was the country all about that it was more like a far-off mountain scene than the outskirts of the city. It was a typical spot for the lyre bird's nest. Why shouldn't I look for it? And why shouldn't I find it? June is always my lucky month, and why should it fail me now?

I wasted no more time in conjectures, but jumped up, and walked along the rocks at the edge. I had not gone more

than a dozen yards when suddenly, almost below me, a large brown bird shot out from the ground, and skimmed down the gorge, with rounded wings. It was a hen lyre bird. Almost beside myself with excitement, I scrambled down, and there, at the foot of a big blue-gum, on a jutting rock, with a commanding view, was the nest I had so often longed to see. A large, loosely-made nest it was, formed of sticks, and lined with bark and moss and roots and feathers; through the large entrance at the side I could see quite plainly into it, and there in the hollow lay one beautiful purple-tinged grey egg. Very carefully I put my hand in, and lifted it out, to gaze at the spots and blotches which beautified its surface; and very proud of myself I felt as I looked.

For the lyre-bird's nest is one of the hardest of all to find, so safely is it hidden away as a rule in mountain fastnesses. Yet here was I, half a dozen miles from the General Post Office, holding this much-coveted treasure in my hand. And I laughed to myself as I thought how egg-collectors would envy me this find. Very gently I put the egg back in its hiding place, and after making mental notes of the exact position, turned homewards. In a month or so I will go back and find a fluffy chick perhaps, but in the meantime the egg must be left in secret safety.

Do you wonder why I sang as I went back through the bush? I had come out to look for springtime in June, and had found flowers and birds, and greatest treasure of all, the lyre-bird's home.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Tetratheca ericifolia	
Crowea saligna	
Acacia suaveolens	Sweet-scented wattle
Acacia linearis	
Acacia discolor	Port Jackson wattle
Trachymeme ericoides	Wild parsnip
Actinotus minor	Little flannel flower
Hakea propinqua	
Persoonia linearis	
Chloanthes stoechadis	
Styphelia tubiflora	Red five-corners
Styphelia longifolia	Green five-corners
Lysinema pungens	White heath

BIRDS BREEDING IN JUNE.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater
Menura superba	Lyre-bird

July 1

SPIDER-FLOWER

ALREADY "the hounds of spring are on winter's traces." Although it is only the first week of July, the resting time is over, and millions upon millions of little buds are just waiting the signal to burst into flower. In the suburbs the gardens are gorgeous with the golden splendour of the Cootamundra wattle, which is out in its full glory, and the moonlit air at night is heavy with its fragrance. The still finer, though less generally cultivated, Queensland wattle is also coming on well, and another week or so will find it out-rivalling the southern beauty. As you walk along the high-road your eye is caught on every side by great heaps of gold massed against the blue sky, and the ear catches the drone of myriads of bees feeding amongst the blossoms.

But, fascinating though a walk along the high-road is this crisp cold weather, the bush is still more alluring. The days of rain have washed and sweetened the whole world, the soft drops have coaxed the buds to open just enough to let loose

some of their sweetness, and the smell of spring is everywhere. To-day as I walked along the sandy track on the top of the ridge, every sense responded to the fascinations of the season, and my eyes and ears and nose were all keenly awake to the delights around me. Almost before I had passed the last houses on the road I was greeted by the nutty fragrance of the sweet-scented wattle, and my eyes were prepared for the masses of soft cream blossom which shone through the bushes on every side. This wattle, which is truly a winter flower, is at its very best just now, and most of its crumpled buds have unfolded. But close by I found another wattle which has not yet passed the fascinating stage—the small bushes of the myrtle-leafed wattle are warmly red with their richly-coloured stalks and red-tinged buds. It is not one of the most conspicuous bloomers, but in its early stage it has a charm of its own. But then, isn't there a special charm about all buds? They hold the poetry of the future folded in their tiny sheaths, and a joy of expectancy that no fulfilment of opened flower can surpass. All the wonder of the springtime is hidden in the bud of a waiting flower; and when you come on millions of them at once—well, you just hold your breath and give yourself over to the marvel.

To the right of the track where the ridge slopes down to the distant harbour, the white-beard buds spread in a thick carpet; in a few weeks it will be a fragrant white plot, but the woolly white sides are still hidden, and only the rosy

outsides are to be seen. Beyond the pink carpet the tall spikes of the lysinema stand like sentinels amongst the bushes, shedding a faint perfume abroad. Behind them again are the banksias, their orange bottle-brushes shining amongst the dark green leaves and making a fine feeding place for some New Holland and white-cheeked honey-eaters. Already these birds are busily building, and in a thick tangle of flowering needle-bush and banksia I found the nest of the white-cheeked with two newly-hatched chicks. As there is hardly a month in the year when I have not found the nest of either of these two birds, they cannot be taken as an indication of spring, but in a small bushy turpentine in a cleared space I found what is always the first sign of the new season—a tomtit's nest. It was almost ready for eggs, and the little birds were busily flying to and fro with soft feathers for the lining. Their sweet little song trickled out on the clear air as they flew, and their happiness and satisfaction were almost pathetic; for from the top of a gum tree not far away came the wail of their arch-enemy, the bronze cuckoo, waiting to put her egg in the new nest, as she does every year. But the tomtits did not seem to recognise the melancholy note, and went cheerfully on with their work. While I stood watching the gradual furnishing of the new home, I found that the cuckoo was not the only foe the tomtits had. All around I heard the courting note of the black-caps, a low, soft whistle, quite distinct from their usual harsh "cheep, cheep;" and though I knew it would soon be time to look for

their tiny cradle-nests, I was rather astonished to see a pair fly down from the top of the turpentine, pick a thread from the

The Black-caps' Breakfast

tomtit's bulky nest, and dart off with it to the topmost branch, where already could be seen the foundation of their nest. Poor

little tomtits! they are so unsuspicious and good-natured, and it seems very unfair that their simplicity should be so imposed upon. Still, their nest is really rather ragged, and they could spare a few fibres for the black-cap's tiny home.

The only other birds I found building were the sweet-voiced, tawny-crowned honey-eaters, though everywhere I heard the courting notes, and saw birds evidently looking round for nesting spots.

But I had come out with an object in view. Last month I had found a lyre-bird's nest with an egg. Two weeks ago I visited it, and found the treasure still intact, and to-day I hoped to find the chick. So I left the tomtits to their building, and hurried on. At least I meant to hurry, but the path was one long series of interruptions. Such sweet interruptions they were, though, that I could not grumble. First there was a gorgeous clump of—oh, hateful name!—bossiaea, its flat stalks thickly covered with brown and golden pea blossoms that stood out in sharp contrast to the pale sandy soil. Then a little further on I found the first dillwynia of the year. Two or three plants were sparsely decorated with the opening yellow blossoms, but one small bush in a sheltered spot was covered with flowers, and stood out bravely as the forerunner of the golden army which will soon overrun the whole bush. Crimson spider-flowers were the next to hold my attention, and as I stopped to admire them I saw the clear yellow round flowers of the little hibbertia peering through a tangle of bushes. I

pushed my way through the leaves, and found that the place was pink with the early boronia. I had not noticed it before, but now I found it at every step. It is not the prettiest of the boronias; its pink is perhaps rather crude, but very lovely it looked amongst the grey sand and dark green bushes. I stayed to pick an armful and a few stray spikes of tea-tree, which toned down the harshness. Then, as I left the shelter of the scribbly gums and the banksias, I came upon some more whitebeards, this time in full flower. They were a smaller kind than those I had passed before, not growing more than a foot high, but a brave little show the things made. I stopped to add a few sprays to my bunch, and also a piece of the beautiful red five-corner, and then I set my face to the track again, determined to loiter no longer. I had to stop once to pick some fine spikes of the pink sprengelia and a few pieces of the green five-corner, also some sprays of the honey-sweet native jasmine, whose white star flowers made a brilliant show, but after that I kept on my way. Perhaps the fact that my hands were as full as they would hold helped me in my determination, for it certainly requires great strength of mind to pass any of the first spring blossoms. But there was the nest at the end of my walk, and, I hoped, the little fluffy brown chick, so I hurried on.

I knew the way quite well, and less than half an hour's walk brought me to the spot. As I drew near I heard the voice of the lyre bird down in the gully, and quickened my steps,

hoping that, with luck, I might see the parent feeding the baby. I left my bunch of flowers in a shady spot, and scrambled over the rock to the big blue-gum at whose foot was the nest. Ex-

Where sunlit bracken spreads beneath the gums

citedly I drew near, then stopped and listened. The ringing notes of the male bird floated up from the valley once again, but this time they were farther off, and there was no sign of

the mother bird near. I would just peep in and have a look at the chick, then hide somewhere near, and wait for the parent to return. I stepped carefully forward, peeped in, and found—nothing. The nest was bare.

I am not a tearful subject, but you must admit that to have had my treasure robbed from under my very eyes was enough to make anyone weep with anger. I had been looking forward so much to seeing the baby bird, and had meant to bring my camera and photograph it. And now nothing remained but the empty nest. Some vandal had found my treasure trove, and I was left lamenting.

It was a very disappointed me that turned homewards, But already the sun was flinging crimson banners in the west, and the notes of the butcher bird and the thickhead came full and sweet on the gentle breeze; high overhead swallows were skimming, and a flock of silver-eyes went "peek-peeking" by. It wasn't a time to be sad. Despite the chill creeping up from the gullies, the joy of spring was in the air. Why should I cherish my disappointment about the loss of one treasure when the world holds so many?

> The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
> From leaf to flower;

and the weeks to come will bring joys too many to grasp. So, clasping my sweet burden tighter in my arms, I marched towards the sunset, singing.

FLOWERS BLOOMING.

Hibbertia Billardieri	
Tetratheca ericifolia	
Zieria laevigata	
Boronia ledifolia	
Boronia poligalifolia	
Correa speciosa	Native fuchsia
Ricinocarpus pinifolius	Native jasmine
Pimelea glauca	
Dillwynia ericifolia	
Bossiaea scolopendria	
Acacia juniperina	
Acacia myrtifolia	
Acacia suavolens	Sweet-scented wattle
Acacia longifolia	Sydney golden wattle
Acacia discolor	Port Jackson wattle
Cryptandra amara	
Hakea acicularis	Needlebush
Persoonia lanceolata	
Banksia ericifolia	Honeysuckle, or Bottlebrush
Banksia marginata	
Olearia ramulosa	Snow bush
Styphelia longiflora	Five-corners
Styphelia tubiflora	
Astroloma humifusum	Ground berries
Astroloma pinifolium	
Leucopogon ericoides	White beards
Leucopogon virgatus	
Epacris microphylla	
Epacris longiflora	Native fuchsia
Epacris pulchella	
Lysinema pungens	
Monotoca elliptica	Pigeon berry

BIRDS BREEDING IN JULY.

Acanthiza chrysorrhoa	Tomtit
Meliornis novae-hollandiae	New Holland honey-eater

Meliornis sericea	White-cheeked honey-eater
Melithreptus lunulatus	Blackcap
Zosterops caerulescens	Silvereye
Pardalotus punctatus	Diamond-bird
Menura superba	Lyre-bird
Chalcococcyx plagosus	Bronze cuckoo

W. C. Penfold & Co., Printers, 183 Pitt Street, Sydney.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA CRUZ
SCIENCE LIBRARY

This book is due on the last **DATE** stamped below.
To renew by phone, call **459-2050**.
Books not returned or renewed within 14 days
after due date are subject to billing.

SCI. LIB.

Series 2477

GAYLORD | | | PRINTED IN U.S.A.

SK602.A9H3 Sci
3 2106 00268 8460